

“Trampling the Old Laws”

Traces of Papal Latinity in the Old Slavonic Vita Methodii

JAKUB KABALA

Latin literacy played a critical role in the twilight years of Great Moravia, an early medieval Slavic polity in Central Europe. In the 880s, two competing clergies jostled for ecclesiastical control in the land: one, led by the Byzantine lawyer and papally appointed archbishop Methodius, promoted the use of a novel Slavic liturgy; the other, led by a Bavarian bishop named Wiching, favored a traditional Latin liturgy.¹ Both groups, however, relied on the testimony of Latin documents issued by or for the papal curia in order to advance their cause, as illustrated by two episodes.

In 880 Methodius had been forced to defend himself from charges of heresy (presumably pushed by the Latin clergy) before Pope John VIII (872–882) in Rome. In response, the pope had approved Methodius’s Slavic liturgy, appointed Wiching to be Methodius’s suffragan bishop in Nitra (in modern Slovakia), and recorded his decisions in the *Industriae tuae*, a letter of June 880 addressed to the Moravian ruler Sventopulk.²

1 The conflict between Wiching and Methodius was first explored in depth by A. Lapôtre, *L’Europe et le Saint-Siège à l’époque carolingienne*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1895), 1:91–170; repr. in idem, *Études sur la papauté au IXe siècle*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1978), 2:157–236. See also the shorter treatments in P. Duthilleul, “Les sources de l’histoire des saints Cyrille et Méthode,” *EO* 34.179 (1935): 272–306, at 277–94; and F. Grivec, *Konstantin und Method: Lehrer der Slaven* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 113–20, 124–28, and 141–47. On Wiching, see also J. Lešny, “Wiching,” in *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, 8 vols. (Wrocław, 1961–96), 6.2:416–18.

2 John VIII, Ep. 255, in *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, ed. E. Caspar, *MGH Ep* 7 (Berlin, 1928), 222–24. For a critical study of this

However, Wiching and his Latinate clergy delivered to the Moravians a falsified version of John VIII’s exculpatory letter, transforming the pope’s support for Methodius into a decree of banishment. Two copies of the *Industriae tuae* thus circulated in Moravia—one forged, the other authentic—and the fight over its actual meaning led to a dramatic confrontation in 880. According to the Old Slavonic *Vita Methodii* (VM), an apologetic text written in defense of Methodius and his Slavic church,

The old enemy . . . raised certain men [hostile Latin clerics] against him [Methodius]. . . . They said, “The pope has given power to us, and commands that he and his teaching be driven out.” And all the Moravian people, having gathered together, were demanding that the letter be read out before them, so that they might hear of his expulsion. . . . And having read through the papal letter, they found the passage: “Our brother Methodius is holy and orthodox, he is fulfilling an apostolic deed, and all the Slavic lands are in his hands from God and the apostolic see. May whoever curses him be cursed, and whoever blesses him be blessed.”³

document, see L. E. Havlík, “The Roman Privilege ‘Industriae tuae’ for Moravia (1100th Anniversary),” *Cyrillomethodianum* 7 (1983): 23–37.

3 VM 12.177–78: “старыи врагъ . . . въздвиже ятеры на пъ . . . глаголѧсте: намъ јестъ пapežъ властъ даљъ, а сего велитъ въпъ изгънати и ученъје

Despite their differences, both sides shared the conviction that papal letters mattered.

The second example follows upon Methodius's death in 885, when the debate over the memory of papal letters only intensified. To advance the cause of the Latin clergy, Wiching again forged a papal letter, this time one sent by Pope Stephen V (885–891) to Sventopulk at the end of 885. Wiching misleadingly inserted into Stephen V's *Quia te zelo fidei* (885) language from John VIII's earlier *Industriae tuae* (880) in order to bolster his own case.⁴ At the same time, an unknown author writing in Slavonic inserted language from a number of other, earlier papal documents into the VM. A full chapter of the VM preserves in Slavonic translation parts of *Gloria in excelsis deo*, a letter likely sent by Pope Hadrian II in 870 to the rulers of Moravia in defense of Methodius;⁵ three chapters of the text

jego. събъравъše že въсѣ ljudi Morавъskyjে, veljaachä pročisti прѣдъ ними epistoliją, da biš slyšali izgънанїе jego... поčътъše že apostolikovy кънigy obrѣtъ ръсанъje: jako братъ наš Methodи svѣtъ i pravovѣrъnъ jestъ, i apostolaskо dѣjanїe dѣlajetъ, и въ rѣku jego саtъ отъ boga i отъ apostolaskajego stola въсѣ Slovеньskyjे strany, da jegože prokльnetъ prokљetъ, a jegože svѣtitъ svѣtъ da байди." I cite the VM and *Vita Constantini* (VC) from T. Lehr-Spławiński, *Konstantyn i Methody: Zarys monograficzny z wyborem źródeł* (Warsaw, 1967), 135–68 (VC) and 169–80 (VM). Lehr-Spławiński provided a normalized Old Church Slavonic text of both sources in Roman transliteration. See also discussion of this episode in Grivec, *Konstantin und Method*, 124–28.

⁴ Stephen V, *Ep. 1*, in *Stephani V. papae epistolae passim collectae, quotquot ad res germanicas spectant*, ed. G. Laehr, MGH Ep 7 (Berlin, 1928), 354–58, with Laehr's assessment at 354, n. 1: *Videtur epistola genuina Stephani papae a Wichingo episcopo partim falsata vel interpolata est*. Wiching's insertions—expressions of support made by John VIII for Methodius, and threats of excommunication against his detractors—read as if they had applied to Wiching, and not his deceased opponent; he also falsely claimed that Methodius had sworn over the relics of St. Peter to no longer celebrate the mass in Slavic. Laehr marked these insertions into the text with brackets (pp. 356–58). See discussion in Grivec, *Konstantin und Method*, 144–47.

⁵ Two different Slavonic versions of this letter survive: one in VM 8.174–76; the other in a roughly contemporaneous eulogy written for Methodius and his brother Constantine after the former's death: "Pokhval'noe slovo Kirillu i Mefodii," in *Materialy po istorii vozniknoveniya drevneišhei slaviānskoj piš'mennosti*, ed. P. A. Lavrov (Leningrad, 1930), 79–87, at 85. No original Latin version survives. Ernst Perels printed the Latin (re-)translation of this text, originally published in Franz Miklosich's 1870 Latin translation of the VM, as one of Hadrian II's dubious letters: *Ep. 43*, in *Hadriani II. papae epistolae*, ed. E. Perels, MGH Ep 6 (Berlin, 1925), 763–64. Long thought to be a fake, most scholars now recognize it as evidence of a lost original; see Duthilleul, "Les sources," 272–77; the critical analysis by M. Kos,

betrays its author's reliance on still other papal letters;⁶ while its lengthy first chapter derives from an earlier profession of faith, likely also in Latin, delivered by Methodius himself before Hadrian II and John VIII.⁷ Altogether up to a full third of the text may have derived from Latin models. Just as in 880, so in 885, both the Bavarian and Slavic clergy of Great Moravia reused and even manipulated Latin papal documents in order to advance their cause.

In short, Great Moravia was home to an active culture of Latinate literacy. Two archives—one at Wiching's see of Nitra, another at Methodius's see, wherever it was—deployed Latin texts associated with the papal curia against each other. One did it in Latin, the other in Slavonic. The VM itself is a product of this competition and culture. It is the goal of this article to demonstrate that an awkward and challenging phrase in the ninth chapter of the VM, one that has been misunderstood and mistranslated for over 150 years, can be understood only in the context of this Latinate culture, so strong in the final years of Great Moravia. But before we begin,

"O pismu papeža Hadriana II. knezom Rastislavu, Svetopolku in Koclu," *Razprave SAZU* 2 (1944): 271–301; and discussion in Grivec, *Konstantin und Method*, 257–61. Peter Ratkoš, meanwhile, has seen in VM 8 a composite forgery based on two earlier papal letters, both now lost; see his "Deperditné listy Hadriána II. slovanským kniežatám z roku 869–870," *Slovenská archivistika* 19.2 (1984): 75–95, with German summary at 94–95.

⁶ These include a purported letter of Nicholas I inviting the brothers to Rome (VM 6); John VIII's letters to the Bavarian bishops who had imprisoned Methodius (VM 10); and John VIII's *Industriae tuae* to Sventopulk, clearing Methodius of Wiching's accusation of heresy (VM 12; cited above). See V. Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy Konstantina a Metoděje* (Prague, 1963), 107; and P. Lytwyn, "Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii: Eine Untersuchung zur altchristlichen Literaturgeschichte" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1962), 89–90. Only Lytwyn mentions the purported letter of Nicholas I informing VM 6.

⁷ VM 1 contains a theological treatise situating Methodius within the grand sweep of biblical history and listing the ecumenical councils and the heresies they had combated. This chapter is sufficiently different in content and style from the rest of the VM to have convinced scholars that VM 1 and VM 2–17 were composed by two different authors. See H. Löwe, "Cyrill und Methodius zwischen Byzanz und Rom," in *Gli Slavi occidentali e meridionali nell'alto medioevo: 15–21 aprile 1982*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 30, 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1983), 2:631–86, at 639–42, with notes and references; and especially Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 86–92, who argued that this chapter was based on Methodius's earlier *profession fidei*, which likely existed in Latin form (p. 92).

let us first take stock of who Methodius was, and how his ninth-century *Vita* came to be written and preserved.



The *Vita Methodii* recounts the last act of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission, a remarkable historical episode that brought Byzantine, papal, and Slavic worlds into intimate contact in the second half of the ninth century.⁸ According to the Slavonic sources, the Moravian ruler Rastislav (r. 846–870) had sent a request to the Byzantine emperor Michael III (r. 842–867) for Christian teachers who could teach the religion to his Slavic people in their own language. The sources tell us that Michael entrusted this challenging mission to Constantine, a brilliant scholar and diplomat well known in Constantinople, who, with his brother Methodius, hailed from Thessalonike. Since the Slavs did not have a written culture of their own, Constantine developed a new alphabet, known today as Glagolitic, in order to translate the basic scriptural and liturgical texts into Slavic. In 863 he traveled to the Moravians with Methodius and a group of their students; over the course of the next three years, they successfully laid the groundwork for a church whose very liturgy would be sung in Slavic.

News of the mission reached Pope Nicholas I, who, for reasons of his own, likely invited the brothers

and their disciples to Rome in 867.⁹ Constantine died in Rome in 869 and was buried in the Basilica of San Clemente. (In his final days, Constantine became a monk and took on the monastic name of Cyril. Scholars use the names Constantine, Cyril, and Constantine-Cyril to refer to the same person.) Methodius, meanwhile, returned to the Moravians in 870, first as a bishop and then as an archbishop under the direct supervision of the papal curia, in order to continue the work he had begun with his brother. He devoted the last fifteen years of his life to defending the papally approved Slavic liturgy in the face of stiff opposition from Bavarian bishops, who still claimed the area for their own Latinate missionary work. It was an uphill battle for Methodius: he suffered two and a half years of Bavarian imprisonment (870–872), accusations of heresy that required his defense in Rome (879/880), and dwindling political support from Sventopulk. Soon after Methodius's death in 885, the Bavarians expelled the remaining Slavic clergy from the land, and the Slavic mission in Moravia collapsed. Its most famous disciples, Clement of Ohrid and Naum, found a warm welcome in Bulgaria, where they established a vibrant Slavic literary and intellectual culture in Preslav and elsewhere.¹⁰

The VM is our most important record for Methodius's life and career. It is not a long text, occupying twelve pages in a recent edition.¹¹ It survives in nineteen manuscripts from the twelfth to eighteenth centuries, all written in an East Slavic recension of Old Slavonic, and all housed in Russian libraries.¹² The first edition was published by Pavel Šafařík in 1851

⁸ The most important sources for the lives of Constantine and his brother Methodius are the VC and VM, as cited above. Their history has been analyzed in great detail, and from many perspectives: see F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933), and idem, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970); Grivec, *Konstantin und Method*; C. Hannick, "Die byzantinischen Missionen," in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte 2.1: Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. K. Schäferdiek (Munich, 1978), 279–359; Löwe, "Cyrill und Methodius zwischen Byzanz und Rom"; P. Duthilleul, *L'évangélisation des Slaves: Cyrille et Méthode* (Tournai, Belgium, 1963); A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970), 20–85; A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica: The Acculturation of the Slavs* (Crestwood, NY, 2001); and M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001), 181–96. For an important and recent reinterpretation of Constantine and the VC, see M. Ivanova, "Re-thinking the *Life of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher*," *SEER* 98.3 (2020): 434–63.

⁹ A.-E. N. Tachiaos, "Cyril and Methodius' Visit to Rome in 868: Was It Scheduled or Fortuitous?," *Palaeoslavica* 10.2 (2002): 210–21.

¹⁰ Theophylact, twelfth-century archbishop of Ohrid (1088/89–ca. 1126) provides a vivid account of the flight from Moravia to Bulgaria in his Greek *Vita of St. Clement*; A. Milev, ed. and trans., *Grútskite zhitiia na Kliment Ohridski: Uvod, tekst, prevod i obiásnitelni belezhki* (Sofia, 1966), esp. 116–23. On Clement, see Grivec, *Konstantin und Method*, 148–69; and M. Kusseff, "St. Clement of Ochrida," *SEER* 27.68 (1948): 193–215. On Naum, see M. Kusseff, "St. Nahum," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 29.72 (1950): 139–52; and A. Škoviera, "Svatý Naum Ochridský," *Konštantínove listy* 2 (2009): 58–65.

¹¹ Lehr-Splawiński, *Konstantyn i Metody*, 169–80.

¹² For a full list and description of manuscripts, see B. Mircheva, *Opis na prepisite na slavjanskie izvori za Kiril i Metodii i tekhnite ucheniisi* (= *Kirilo-Metodievski studii* 23) (Sofia, 2014), 58–65. Mircheva also lists several still later transcriptions from the nineteenth century.

on the basis of a sixteenth-century manuscript in the Moscow Theological Academy.¹³ Subsequent editions have relied on the superior testimony of the Uspenskii sbornik, a twelfth- or early thirteenth-century manuscript discovered in the library of the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Moscow Kremlin a few years after Šafařík's edition appeared.¹⁴ Lexically and grammatically the most archaic of the variants, the Uspenskii sbornik's text of the VM has also been the basis for most subsequent studies.¹⁵

In 1843 A.V. Gorski argued in a landmark article in *Moskvitánin* that the Slavonic VM and *Vita Constantini* (VC) were first-rate historical sources worthy of the careful attention of scholars.¹⁶ This realization inspired a remarkable and ongoing effort to understand the two texts, not least by simply translating them. The first translation of the VM appeared in 1854 in Latin, prepared by Franz Miklosich and published by Ernst Dümmler.¹⁷ Since then, forty-three full translations of the VM have appeared in seventeen languages, while numerous

other works include independent translations of individual chapters of the text (see the appendix for a list of these).¹⁸ Such a prolific translation output—staggering even for a medievalist's standards—has been matched by an equally extraordinary volume of scholarship.¹⁹ The broad attention Methodius and his brother Constantine have attracted may be explained by the ecumenical nature of the project they pursued. Although some conflict certainly characterized ninth-century relations between Rome and Constantinople, no contemporary could have imagined the confessional split between East and West that would befall Christendom in later centuries.²⁰ As a result, no single tradition of contemporary historiography has been able to lay exclusive claim to the history of Constantine and Methodius. Indeed, a common theme in the scholarship describes the brothers as a bridge connecting East and West and situates them “between Byzantium and Rome.”²¹ It is a

13 “Život sv. Methodia: Z rukopisu XVI. století,” in *Památky drevního písemenictví Jihoslovanuv*, ed. P. J. Šafářík (Prague, 1851). The manuscript used by Šafářík (rendered Šafářík by modern cataloguers) is ms. 4 as described by Mircheva, *Opis*, 59–60.

14 See edition of the full manuscript in S. I. Kotkov et al., *Uspenskii sbornik XII–XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1971), with a helpful introduction at pp. 3–28, and the text of the VM at 188–98. On the dating of the manuscript, see *ibid.*, 24. August Bielowski (Život Š. Metodego [Lwów, 1858], 3) attributed its discovery to V. M. Undolski. According to Kotkov et al. (*Uspenskii sbornik*, 4), the first publication to mention the manuscript appeared in 1855. See also Mircheva, *Opis*, 58–59, ms. 1.

15 In 1865 O. Bodianskii printed the Uspenskii text as the first of eight manuscript variants of the VM in *Chteniá v imperatorskom obshchestvi istorii i drevnostej rossíiskikh pri Moskovskom universiteti* 1 (1865). Subsequent editions include F. Pastrnek, *Dějiny slovanských apoštolů Cyrilla a Methoda* (Prague, 1902), 216–38, which introduced the commonly used seventeen-chapter division of the VM; A. Teodorov-Balan, *Kiril i Metodi*, 2 vols. (Sofia, 1920–34), 1:81–105; Lavrov, *Materialy po istorii vozniknoveniâ drevneishei slaviánskoj pišmennosti*, 67–78; and F. Grivec and F. Tomšić, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses: Fontes*, Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta 4 (Zagreb, 1960), 145–67, which remains the most widely used edition today. On the lexical and grammatical value of the Uspenskii text, see discussion in Grivec and Tomšić, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses*, 125–26.

16 A. V. Gorski, “O sv. Kirillie i Methodii,” *Moskvitánin* 6 (1843): 405–34.

17 It was published and outfitted with an introduction and detailed commentary by Ernst Dümmler in “Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius,” *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen* 13 (1854): 145–99, with Miklosich's translation at pp. 156–63.

18 This does not include publications that combine the translated testimony of the VC and VM into more or less accurate paraphrases in order to produce a synthetic and popular account of their lives. This last genre has an old pedigree, and is ongoing. For an early example, see J. Bílý, *Dějiny svatých apoštolů slovanských Cyrilla a Methoda* (Prague, 1863). For a more recent example, see M. Roman, trans., *Saints Cyril and Methodius (A Translation of an Historical Narrative about the Apostles to the Slavs, Written in the Carpatho-Ruthenian Literary Language by Rev. Eugene A. Fensik of Blessed Memory—1844–1903)* (Munhall, PA, 1954).

19 The output has been so voluminous that retrospective bibliographies of Cyrillo-Methodian scholarship began to appear already in the nineteenth century, and have continued throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to assemble and categorize the ever-growing scholarly output. See, for example, N. M. Lisovskii, *Bibliograficheskij ukazatel' knig i statei o slaviánskikh pervouchiteljakh sv. Kirillie i Mefodii* (Saint Petersburg, 1885); I. E. Mozhaeva, *Bibliografija po kirillo-mefodievskoj problematike, 1945–1974 gg.* (Moscow, 1980); I. Dučhev, *Kirilometodievska bibliografija, 1940–1980* (Sofia, 1983); and L. Havlíková, *Po stopách sv. Cyrila a Metoda: Výberová bibliografie českých a slovenských práce za roky 1945–2011* (Nitra, 2013).

20 A widely read account of the brothers' turn to Rome captures this well: “Cyril's action in appealing to Rome shows that he did not take the quarrel between Photius and Nicolas too seriously; for him east and west were still united as one Church, and it was not a matter of primary importance whether he depended on Constantinople or Rome, so long as he could continue to use Slavonic in Church services”; T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. repr. (London, 1997), 74–75.

21 See the suggestive titles of J. Bujnoch, ed. and trans., *Zwischen Rom und Byzanz: Leben und Wirken der Slavenapostel Kyrillos und Methodios nach den pannonischen Legenden und der Clemensvita. Bericht von der Taufe Russlands nach der Laurentiuschronik* (Graz, 1958); Löwe, “Cyrill und Methodius zwischen Byzanz und Rom”;

picture that also emerges from the sources themselves, especially about Methodius, who, according to the VM, not only served Byzantium and Rome in official capacities but maintained contact with both seats of power until his final days.²² Fittingly, Pope John Paul II even declared the brothers copatrons of Europe, alongside St. Benedict, in his 1980 encyclical *Egregiae virtutis*.²³

Despite its ecumenical appeal and long history of translation and study, the VM remains a mysterious text. About the only thing that scholars agree on today is that it was written in Slavonic at some point after 885, the year in which Methodius died. Many fundamental questions remain open, including those about the text's authorship and its place and date of composition.²⁴ Most scholars today accept that the VM was written by someone close to Methodius, most likely one of his disciples. Frequently suggested candidates have included Clement of Ohrid and Constantine of Preslav, both of whom became bishops in Bulgaria and seminal figures in the development of that land's Slavonic written culture in the years following their expulsion from Moravia. But a definitive identification remains elusive.²⁵ We can tell that the author must have been

V. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj: Mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem* (Prague, 2013); and J. Vodopivec, *I santi fratelli Cirillo e Metodio, compatroni d'Europa: Anello culturale tra l'Oriente e l'Occidente* (Rome, 1985). France Grivec (*Konstantin und Method*, 156) claims the brothers wished to "mediate between East and West."

22 As an administrator in Byzantium (VM 2), bishop and archbishop under the papacy (VM 8 and 10), prisoner of the Bavarians (VM 9), resident among the Slavs, and someone who maintained in-person contact with both Rome (John VIII, *Ep.* 255: *Industriae tuae*) and Constantinople (VM 13) in his later years, Methodius truly moved between Byzantium and Rome at a time when these sister civilizations enjoyed intellectual, personal, and even theological relations.

23 John Paul II, "Egregiae virtutis," *Acta apostolicae sedis* 73 (1981): 258–62.

24 For overviews of the VM and its circumstances of composition, see Grivec and Tomšić, *Constantinus et Methodius ThessalonICENSES*, 17–28; A. Salajka, "Die Quellen zum Leben und zur Geschichte von Konstantin-Kyrill und Method," in idem, *Konstantin-Kyrill aus Thessalonike* (Würzburg, 1969), 11–25; Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 85–113, with French summary of the entire work at pp. 114–23; and G. Podskalsky, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien 865–1459* (Munich, 2000), 273–79.

25 Clement of Ohrid was often proposed as a candidate author for the VM in the early stages of Cyrillo-Methodian research; see Salajka, "Die Quellen zum Leben und zur Geschichte von Konstantin-Kyrill und Method," 16–21, esp. 17. Recent scholarship on Clement has been more circumspect; see K. Stanchev and G. Popov, *Kliment Okhridski: Zhivot i tvorchestvo* (Sofia, 1988), 56, who prefer to view the VM as

both close to Methodius and also well versed in other writings of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission. Although he reproduced little from the Slavonic VC (which likely already existed before the end of 882), he carefully and intentionally drew on other related documents (such as papal letters in VM 8, 10, and 12, and even possibly on Methodius's profession of faith in VM 1).²⁶

The author's reliance on Latin documents, as well as his favorable disposition toward the pope, have led generations of scholars going back to Gorski (1843) to suspect that the VM was composed in an area falling under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome.²⁷ The most likely candidate for such an area would be Great Moravia itself. If true, this would in turn date the composition of the text to the brief and hectic period following the death of Methodius in 885, during which his disciples faced the growing hostility of Wicing and the Bavarian clergy. As many have observed, such conditions of composition would explain the lack of any reference in the text to the collapse of Methodius's project or the expulsion of his disciples from Moravia.

an "anonymous work"; and I. Iliev, *Sv. Kliment Okhridski: Zhivot i delo* (Plovdiv, 2010), 159–60 and 185, who considers the matter of Clement's authorship impossible to determine at present. Some today consider Constantine of Preslav a more likely candidate; A. Stoikova, "Agiografiata prez IX–XI vek," in *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura*, ed. A. Miltenova and A. Angusheva-Tikanova (Sofia, 2008), 130–42, at 137.

26 For a possible Latin model underlying VM 1, see Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 92. For the derivation of VM 8 from one or more authentic papal letters, see Kos, "O pismu papeža Hadriana II." and Ratkoš, "Deperditné listy Hadriána II." For the early dating of the VC, see P. Meyvaert and P. Devos, "Trois énigmes cyrillo-méthodiennes de la 'Légende Italique' résolues grâce à un document inédit," *AB* 73 (1955): 375–461.

27 See Gorski, "O sv. Kirilli ē i Methodii," 405–7, with translation in W. Hanka, "O sw. Kyrille i Methodiu," *Časopis Českého Museum* 20 (1846): 5–33, at 6–7; and Dümmler, "Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius," 151. The view has been supported more recently by Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 108–13; and A. A. Turilov, "K istorii velikomoravskogo naslediia v literaturakh ūzhynykh i vostochnykh Slaviān (Slovo 'O pokhvale Bogoroditse Kirilla Filosofa' v rukopisnoi traditsii XV–XVII vv.)" in *Velikaiā Moraviā: Ee istoricheskoe i kul'turnoe znachenie*, ed. G. È Sanchuk and J. Poulik (Moscow, 1985), 253–69, at 258. Angel Nikolov has discussed the traces of Western influence in the VM on a broader scale in "Empire, Papacy and Gentes in the Earliest Vitae of St. Constantine-Cyril and St. Methodius," in *Kyriλλος καὶ Μεθόδιος: Το Βυζαντίο καὶ ο Κόσμος των Σλαβών. Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο, 28–30 Νοεμβρίου 2013 = Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference*, ed. A.-E. N. Tachiaos (Thessalonike, 2015), 703–8.

Although not universally acknowledged, the evidence in favor of the VM's early composition in Great Moravia by an author close to Methodius nevertheless seems to outweigh the questions it raises.²⁸

An early dating in Moravia would also explain the tone and style of the VM, in which many scholars have detected the signs of an apologetic work meant to defend Methodius and his church.²⁹ Like other aspects of the text, the specific intentions and intended audience of an apologetic VM remain under discussion. Vladimír Vavřínek, for example, has argued that its author composed the text shortly after Methodius's death in order to persuade the Great Moravian aristocracy of the bishop's orthodoxy, hoping that this would in turn preserve his Slavic liturgy and church in their land; defending papal interests and primacy, Vavřínek claimed, was a critical element in the author's defense of Methodius.³⁰ Elsewhere, A. A. Turilov has argued that the VM arose in Great Moravia as part of an early and failed attempt to canonize Methodius. His argument follows from the publication in 1998 of the earliest known hymnographic office in honor of Methodius, which L. V. Moshkova and Turilov demonstrated was most likely composed in Moravia as an "instrument in the ecclesiastical and political struggle that determined the future of the Moravian church";³¹ according to Turilov, the VM should be seen as part of the same

28 For example, some scholars place the composition of the VM in Bulgaria; see, for example, Stoikova, "Agiografiata prez IX–XI vek," 137. Thomas Lienhard even urges caution with an early dating of the VC and VM, suggesting instead a later time of composition in the late tenth or eleventh centuries, either in Bohemia, Bulgaria, or Italy, in "The Life of Constantine, the Life of Methodius and the History of the Slavs in the Ninth Century: A Reassessment," *EME* 28.1 (2020): 57–78. Lienhard admits that his thought-provoking reassessment is conjectural—and this is especially true for the case of the VM.

29 For example, André Vaillant thought the VM was an apology for Methodius and his orthodoxy, as well as his work; see his "Quelques notes sur la Vie de Méthode," *BSL* 24 (1963): 229–35, at 234.

30 See Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 108–13; see also an English summary of his conclusions in V. Vavřínek and B. Záštěrová, "Byzantium's Role in the Formation of Great Moravian Culture," *BSL* 43.2 (1982): 161–88, at 175–76. According to Vavřínek, if the author of the VM could demonstrate that the papacy enjoyed primacy over the whole church, and that Methodius enjoyed very close ties of support and obedience to the papal see, he could argue that a rejection of Methodius's church by Great Moravian elites would be a rejection of their land's continued growth and prosperity.

31 L. V. Moshkova and A. A. Turilov, "Moravskye zemle velen grazhdanin' (Neizvestnaia drevniaia sluzhba pervouchitelia Mefodii)," *Slavianovedenie* 4 (1998): 3–23, esp. 15.

"hymnographic and hagiographic cycle" that aimed for Methodius's canonization.³² Most recently, Mirela Ivanova has taken a different tack but reached similar conclusions. She argues that the authors of the VM, threatened by the legal and historical claims to Moravia-Pannonia leveled by the neighboring Franks, ethnicized the origins of the Slavonic alphabet in the VM by "emulating the rhetoric of earlier papally sanctioned missionary activity"; according to Ivanova, such a strategy points to "a clerical elite in central Europe desperately trying to clutch onto the patronage of a wavering papal court."³³ However different in their details, all these theories help explain the strikingly favorable treatment of the papacy evident in the VM. They also give context to the text's direct and simple style, which, although it has inspired critique from some quarters, may testify to the difficult conditions in which it was conceived, and the urgency with which it was composed.³⁴

This article explores a philological puzzle in the central, ninth chapter of the VM, which describes the momentous events following Methodius's return to the Slavs from Rome in 870. Upon returning, he was captured and hauled to a synod, most likely before Louis the German in Regensburg, where he was tried for trespassing on Bavarian missionary territory, and, as a result, imprisoned somewhere in Bavaria for two and a half years. Scholarly attention to VM 9 has generally pursued one of two sets of questions: a historical set (what exactly happened in 870, and where?), and a philological one (how did the author describe those events, and with what literary models?). These questions, in turn, have generally led scholars to different sources. Since the events transpired in Bavaria, those interested in the historical questions have naturally sought their answers in Latin texts: they have searched

32 A. A. Turilov, *Mezslavianskie kul'turnye sviazi epokhi Srednevekovija i istochnikovedenie istorii i kul'tury slavjan: Ètudi i kharakteristiki* (Moscow, 2012), 102, n. 59: "The hymnographic and hagiographic cycle dedicated to the Moravian archbishop was created primarily for his failed canonization as patron of the see... [of Sirmium]."

33 M. Ivanova, "Inventing and Ethnicising Slavonic in the Long Ninth Century," *JMedHist* 47.4–5 (2021): 574–86, at 584–85.

34 Nicolaas van Wijk, for example, wrote of the "trockene Erzählungsart der Vita Methodii" in "Zur sprachlichen und stilistischen Würdigung der altkirchenslavischen Vita Constantini," *SüdostF* 6 (1941): 74–102, at 78. On the difficult conditions under which the VM was composed, see Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy*, 85–86; on their effect on the language of the source, see Grivec and Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicensis*, 19.

for the exact place of Methodius's imprisonment in a number of Frankish records, and they have tried to make sense of the extraordinary entries, written in the Greek alphabet, for a Methodius and other Greeks in the *liber memorialis* of the Reichenau monastery.³⁵ Scholars interested in the philological questions, meanwhile, have largely sought their answers in Greek texts: Franz Gnidovec heard in the chapter's opening description of the devil as the "the old enemy, envious of the good" an echo of Gregory of Nazianzos's fourth-century Greek;³⁶ Josef Vašica derived the chapter's technical and administrative language of territory and boundaries from Greek-language canons of late antique church councils;³⁷ Johann Schröpfer detected in the account of the Frankish king's intervention in the dispute an echo of the late fourth- and early fifth-century Armenian author known as Faustus of Byzantium;³⁸

35 Methodius's trial has generated a hefty bibliography of its own. For a comprehensive overview of scholarship on Methodius's imprisonment, see E. Kruttschnitt, "Ellwangen—der Verbannungsort des Slavenapostels Methodius? Ein forschungsgeschichtlicher Überblick, zugleich ein Schulbeispiel der Rezeption," *Rotenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte* 8 (1989): 149–217. See also discussion and bibliography in Löwe, "Cyrill und Methodius zwischen Byzanz und Rom," 665, n. 145; A. Zettler, "Der heilige Methodios auf der Insel Reichenau," in *Methodios und Kyrios in ihrer europäischen Dimension*, ed. E. Konstantinou, 261–69 (Frankfurt am Main, 2005); Lienhard, "Reassessment," 76–78; and a number of contributions in K. Trost, E. Völk, and E. Wedel, eds., *Symposium Methodianum: Beiträge der internationalen Tagung in Regensburg (17. bis 24. April 1983) zum Gedenken an den 1100. Todestag des hl. Method* (Neuried, 1988), including K. Gamber, "Der Erzbischof Methodios vor der Reichsversammlung in Regensburg des Jahres 870," 111–15; B. Pejčev, "ΔΡΑΤΑΪC, Dragais, und die Stellung Methods in Reichenau," 213–15; and A. Zettler, "Methodius in Reichenau: Bemerkungen zur Deutung und zum Quellenwert der Einträge im Verbrüderungsbuch," 367–79.

36 F. Gnidovec, *Vpliv sv. Gregorija Nazianskega na sv. Cirila in Metodija ter na njuni žitji* (Ljubljana, 1942), 47–51.

37 J. Vašica, *Literární památky epochy velkomoravské, 863–885* (Prague, 1966), 247. Vašica observed that the terminology in VM 9 was the same as that used in the Old Slavonic translation of the Byzantine Greek *Nomokanon*; in that collection of canon law, Old Slavic *oblastъ* translated Greek *eparchia* or *paroikia*, and Old Slavic *prédělъ* rendered Greek *enoria* or *hyperorion*.

38 J. Schröpfer, "Eine armenische Quelle der slavischen Vita Methodii, Kap. IX," in *Cyrillo-Methodiana: Zur Frühgeschichte des Christentums bei den Slaven, 863–1963*, ed. M. Hellmann (Cologne, 1964), 432–39. According to Schröpfer, VM 9 follows an unusual plot structure: an ecclesiastical dispute is presided over by a secular ruler unsympathetic to the hero of the story, in which the hero's imminent victory is first disrupted by a ruler's observation that the hero is sweating, and then overturned as a result of the hero's untactful response.

while Joseph Schütz even saw in the entire composition of VM 9 evidence that Methodius's biographer knew and applied principles of Aristotelian poetics and rhetoric.³⁹ In short, philological studies of VM 9 have generally treated its text as a product of the Byzantine literary tradition.

Yet VM 9 contains an unsolved linguistic puzzle, which, I argue, cannot be explained by recourse to Greek texts alone. At one point in the trial proceedings, Methodius tells his Bavarian opponents: "If I knew [this diocese] to be yours, I would walk outside it—but it belongs to St. Peter." He then defends those papal prerogatives with the following accusation: "na staryje préděly postřapajete črěšť kanony." The meaning of this awkward expression has escaped readers of the text going back to the 1850s. One reason, I hypothesize below, has been the overlooking of contemporary Latin models for its phrasing and composition. It is the aim of this article to explain the accusation in VM 9 in its Latinate linguistic and historical contexts.

To do this, I follow the philological approach that has long guided our understanding of the VM (and VM 9).⁴⁰ I first offer an analysis of the phrase in question

Finding only one literary parallel to this unusual sequence of events, namely, Faustus's account in *History of Armenia* of a dispute between orthodox bishops and Arian teachers under the emperor Valens, Schröpfer suggests that Methodius crafted the account of the 870 ecclesiastical dispute under the influence of this Armenian text.

39 Reflecting on the legal proceedings described in VM 9, Joseph Schütz remarks, "Gewiß ist das alles in griechischer Sprache in Regensburg abgelaufen"; see his "Die Reichssynode zu Regensburg (870) und Methods Verbannung nach Schwaben," *SüdostF* 33 (1974): 1–14, at 7–9.

40 Numerous studies of the language, syntax, and vocabulary of the VM exist. General linguistic studies include F. Tomšič, "Vita Methodii (tekstnokritične opombe)," *SlavRev* 8 (1955): 195–208; idem, "Vita Methodii II," *SlavRev* 9 (1956): 65–79; Vaillant, "Quelques notes sur la Vie de Méthode"; and H. Birnbaum, "Zur Sprache der Methodvita," in Hellmann, *Cyrillo-Methodiana*, 329–61. Various words and phrases found in the VM have inspired scholarly exchanges of their own. On the extraordinarily rare and early usage of *korolъ* (= king) in VM 9 and elsewhere in the source, see V. Vavřínek, "Ugɔrɔs̄kyjъ korolъ dans la vie vieux-slave de Méthode," *BSL* 25 (1964): 261–69; P. Ratkoš, "Über die Interpretation der Vita Methodii," *BSL* 28 (1967): 118–23; H. G. Lunt, "Old Church Slavonia >*kraljъ<?" in *Orbis Scriptus: Dmitrij Tschizewskij zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. D. Gerhardt, W. Weintraub, and H.-J. zum Winkel (Munich, 1966), 483–89; and Schütz, "Die Reichssynode zu Regensburg (870)," 4–6. On the meaning of the rare *iznicę* in VM 9, see O. Nedeljković, "Prilog proučavanju leksike Panonskih žitija," *Slovo* 13 (1963): 194–202; J. Schütz, "Wortforschung und Hermeneutik," *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku* 13.2 (1970): 123–26; and

in order to establish its lexical possibilities. Then I review a corpus of forty-four full and nine partial translations of VM in order to trace a recurring translation error in the rendering of this passage, and to understand the reasons for its persistence. This analysis uncovers the misleading spell cast by early translations (especially those produced by scholars of stature) as well as the suggestive nature of related biblical and canonical texts. I argue that VM 9 translates a turn of phrase admired and used by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the ghostwriter of papal letters and friend to Methodius and Constantine. That Latinity is the subject of the last section, in which I establish parallels between VM 9 and contemporary papal letters sent by Nicholas I (858–867), Hadrian II (867–872), and especially John VIII. The translation I propose sheds additional light upon the Latinate context in which the VM was conceived and composed.

Vita Methodii 9

The exact passage in VM 9 that I wish to analyze occurs in the opening of the chapter. I have underlined the passage below both in the Old Slavonic as well as in its most recent (1985) English translation:

Po sem' že starví vragъ, zavidylivъi dobru i protivníkъ istině, vъzdvíže srьdьce vragu Moravskajego kralja na пь, сь vsěmi jepiskupy, jako na naše oblasti učiši. onъ ze отvěšta: i azъ ašte bimъ vědělъ, jako vaša jestъ, kromě bimъ chodilъ, пъ světajego Petra jestъ. da pravđoја ašte li vy гъвъпъja radi i lakomъstva na staryjे прѣдѣly postapajete [Bod. 2–8: nastupajete]

A. Minčeva, “Zur Erforschung des Wortschatzes der Vita Methodii,” *ZSl* 21.6 (1976): 794–800. On the meaning of the confusing word *přrvi* in VM 2, see V. Tkadlčík, “Právníci’ v Životě Metodějově,” *Slovo* 22 (1972): 41–51; and M. Tadin, “Létymologie et la signification de příci de la Vie de Méthode,” *Cyrillomethodianum* 7 (1983): 1–22. Additional studies of words and phrases in the VM include A. R. Vavrus, “On the Translation of a Passage in the *Vita Methodii*,” *IntJournal* 25/26 (1982): 459–63 (on the meaning of the phrase *na lěsē* in VM 7); P. Ratkoš, “Die Sankt-Petrus-Kirmes in Grossmähren gemäß der *Vita Methodii*,” *BSL* 46 (1985): 61–66 (on the meaning of the word *məša* in VM 11); and T. Daiber, “Roman or Byzantine Liturgy? Theological Terminology in the *Vita Methodii*,” *Palaeobulgarica* 39.2 (2015): 21–47. See also the introductions and notes to the editions and translations cited throughout this article and in the appendix.

črěsъ kanony [Bod. 5: zakony], vъzbranjajаšte učenја božъja, bljuděte сę...⁴¹

After that, the ancient enemy who envies goodness and makes war on truth stirred against Methodius the heart of the enemy of the Moravian prince, along with all the bishops who said, “You teach within our diocese.” And he answered, “If I knew it to be yours, I would have stepped aside; but it is St. Peter’s. And truly, if you in your greed and rapacity trespass, despite the canons, over the old borders and forbid the Lord’s teachings in those realms, beware....”⁴²

The underlined phrase—“na staryjे прѣdѣly postapajete [later nastupajete] črěsъ kanony”—consists of a finite verb surrounded by two prepositional phrases.⁴³ The finite verb is a present tense, second person plural form of *postapati* (Uspenskiĭ sbornik) or *nastupati* (all later manuscripts). The first prepositional phrase, *na staryjе прѣdѣly*, consists of the preposition *na* followed by a masculine adjective–noun pair (dictionary form: *staryi prѣdѣlъ*) in the plural and accusative case (*staryjे* прѣdѣly) postapajete

41 Lehr-Sławiński, *Konstantyn i Metody*, 176. In this edition Lehr-Sławiński Romanized his earlier “temporary edition” of the VM, which he had prepared in the 1950s by comparing the Uspenskiĭ sbornik version to earlier nineteenth- and twentieth-century editions of the text; see idem, ed. and trans., *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego (obszerne): Przekład polski ze wstępem i objaśnieniami oraz z dodatkiem zrekonstruowanych tekstów staro-cerkiewno-słowiańskich* (Poznań, 1959), 95–121, with VM 9 at pp. 110–13 and discussion of his editing process at xxxviii–xl. My square brackets contain two variant manuscript readings listed in the latest edition of the VM; see Grivec and Tomšić, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicensis*, 145–67, at 159–60. The two variants I have included are the only ones containing an altogether different word than that found in the Uspenskiĭ sbornik. Manuscript numbers in my square brackets refer to the numbering system established by Bodianski in *Chtenīā* and used by Grivec and Tomšić in their edition. I have left the *nastupajete* as it appears in the manuscripts, without normalizing it to its archaic *nastapajete*.

42 The English text comes from the most recent English translation of the VM, I. Dučhev, ed., and S. Nikolov, trans., *Kiril and Methodius: Founders of Slavonic Writing. A Collection of Sources and Critical Studies* (Boulder, 1985), 81–92, at 88. Spass Nikolov translated the VM into English from the Bulgarian translation of the VM published earlier in B. St. Angelov et al., *Sibrani Súchinenīā*, vol. 3: *Prostranni zhitiā na Kiril i Metodiī* (Sofia, 1973), 196–203.

43 Unless otherwise noted, I draw lexical information from the standard and most thorough dictionary of Old Slavonic literature, *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského = Lexicon linguae palaeosloveniae*, ed. J. Kurz et al. (Prague, 1958–1997) [henceforth *SJS*].

préděly). The second prepositional phrase, *črěsø kanony* (or *zakony*, in one later manuscript), contains the preposition *črěsø* followed by a masculine noun (dictionary form: *kanony*, or *zakony*) in the plural and accusative case (*kanony* or *zakony*). Let us consider the meaning of each of these components.

The *na* in *na staryje préděly* is a versatile preposition corresponding elsewhere to the Greek *ἐπί*.⁴⁴ Followed by an accusative noun evoking a sense of place (as here), *na* can express two relationships: motion onto, over, or upon a place; or hostile motion against something understood in space. The adjective *stary* simply means ‘old’. The singular form of *prédělø* means ‘boundary’ (Gk. *ὅριον* or *ὅρος*; Lat. *finis* or *terminus*), while our plural form (*préděly*) expresses the fuzzier notion of borderlands or regions (Gk. *τὰ ὅρια*; Lat. *fines* or *termini*), or even administrative units in general; according to one dictionary, it can also mean “law” or “commandment.”⁴⁵ Therefore, the phrase *na staryje préděly* may safely be interpreted either as “upon/along the old borders/regions/laws” or “against (in a hostile way) the old borders/regions/laws.”

In the second prepositional phrase (*črěsø kanony*), the preposition *črěsø* most basically expresses movement through some space or hindrance. Old Slavonic authors most often employed it figuratively to highlight the hindrance or impediment itself, in the meaning of “against” (Gk. *παρά*; Lat. *contra*). The phrase *črěsø kanony* thus means “against/in violation of the canons,” while the lone variant *črěsø zakony* means “against/in violation of the laws.”

As said, the verb in our phrase is either *postapajete* or *nastupajete*—both are present tense, second person plural forms built off the same root, *stapati*, meaning “to step” or “to walk” or “to go” (Lat. *calcitrare* or *gradi*): *po-stapati* or *na-stupati*. The prefix *po-*, just as the independent preposition *po*, frequently expresses motion

along the surface of something.⁴⁶ From a purely etymological perspective then, we might expect *postapati* to mean “to walk upon (or over, or along)” something, or “to tread on.”⁴⁷ But the word’s actual meaning is difficult to determine, because it is exceedingly rare in the Old Slavonic records.⁴⁸ The *SJS* lists five attestations of *postapati* in the oldest texts, of which only three occur in the syntactical context found in our passage: *postapati na* [on] + accusative.⁴⁹ Such usage appears, besides in the VM, in the VC and in a likely western Slavic text known as *Prayer against the Devil*. In the former, Constantine warns his Khazar interlocutors not to *postapati* upon (or against) the Christians;⁵⁰ in the latter, an anonymous petitioner pleads with God and his saints to protect him from enemies who are *postapati*ing upon (or against) him.⁵¹ The sense given for this usage in the *SJS* is vague: to act against someone or something (Lat. *agere contra, insistere*).⁵² By this definition, Jewish

46 See *SJS*, s.v. *po*, which organizes its definitions into three sections, depending on the case taken by the following noun: accusative, dative, or locative. With the accusative case, *po* expresses motion and actions pertaining to places in a general way; with the dative and locative cases, the preposition more specifically expresses movements or actions taking place on the surface of something. In each of these sections, the Czech lexicographers first discussed usages involving places and motion.

47 Consider also modern Russian *postup'*, meaning “gait; step; tread”; M. Wheeler, *The Oxford Russian-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1984), s.v. *postup'*.

48 Since *postapati* does not occur in the translations of the Gospels or Psalms, there is no widely known Greek or Latin model to which one could compare it.

49 *SJS*, s.v. *postapati*. Two other attestations in later *praxapostoli* (New Testament lectionaries) occur in a different syntactical context: *postapati otø* [from] + genitive. In this case, the verb means to withdraw or step away from something (Lat. *desistere, absistere*). A paucity of attestations is a common problem in Old Slavonic lexicography; see Minčeva, “Zur Erforschung,” 794.

50 VC 10.153: “ne postapaite na christъjany.” Grivec and Tomšič (*Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicensis*, 193) translated this into Latin as *nolite insectari christianos*.

51 First published by A. I. Sobolevskii in 1910, the text was reprinted by František Mareš in his *An Anthology of Church Slavonic Texts of Western (Czech) Origin: With an Outline of Czech-Church Slavonic Language and Literature and with a Selected Bibliography* (Munich, 1979), 64–68, at 66: “izbavite mę vidimychъ i nevidimychъ vragъ moichъ postupajuščichъ na mę všemi koznъmi.”

52 *SJS*, s.v. *postapati*. The *SJS* provides the same definition for the perfective form, *postapiti*, which occurs in two later Slavonic *parimejniks* (Old Testament lectionaries) in their translation of Genesis 31:7: *sed pater vester circumvenit [postapi] me et mutavit mercedem meam*

44 When followed by a noun in the accusative case, as in our passage, *na* can express a variety of meanings: either a sense of place, a duration of time, a goal or end, a manner of doing something, or (rarely) a cause.

45 The general sense of administrative units is particularly attested in later sources between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries; S. G. Barkhudarov et al., eds., *Slovar' russkogo jazyka XI–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1975–) [henceforth *SRJa*], s.v. *predělø*. For “law” or “commandment,” O. I. Smirnova, the lexicographer responsible for this entry, cited our passage from VM 9 as an example of such usage.

Khazars act against Christians in the VC, and enemies act against a petitioner in the *Prayer*. The verb *postupati* appears much more frequently in East Slavic sources from the eleventh to seventeenth century, where later authors employed it (and its perfective form, *postupiti*) in a literal sense meaning “to go,” “to move from place,” “to approach,” and even to “rush upon,” and in a figurative sense indicating “to pass, turn into” or “to act, to behave.”⁵³ Later East Slavic authors used the verb’s perfective form, *postupiti*, in additional ways: literally in the sense of “to take a step,” and figuratively to mean “to attack” or “to oppress” someone or something, or even “to flout.”⁵⁴

Although the Uspenskiĭ sbornik’s *postapajete* represents the oldest usage, the verbal variant found consistently in later medieval manuscripts of the VM—*nastupajete*—offers an important clue about how the earliest medieval copyists and readers of the VM understood the rare and polyvalent original *postapajete*. In

decem vicibus (Vulgate). Here, the perfective *postupiti* carries the additional meaning of “to cheat”: see *SJS*, s.v. *postupiti*. Cf. later usage in *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 9, which includes *obtanut'*, i.e., “to deceive; to cheat, swindle.”

53 For the literal sense, see *SRJa*, s.v. *postupati*, definitions 1, 2, and 4; cf. *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definitions 3, 4, and 7; and *SRJa*, s.v. *postupitisja*, definition 1. For the figurative sense, see *SRJa*, s.v. *postupati*, definitions 3 and 7; cf. *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 11. The second syntactical context (*postupati otz* [from] + genitive) identified in *SJS*, s.v. *postupati* recurs in the later period as well: *SRJa*, s.v. *postupati*, definition 6 (“to recede, concede”); cf. also *SRJa*, s.v. *postupatisja*, definition 1; *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 10; and *SRJa*, s.v. *postupitisja*, definition 2.

54 For the literal sense, see *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 1. For the figurative sense of “to attack” or “to oppress,” see *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definitions 6 and 9. For the figurative sense of “to flout,” see *SRJa*, s.v. *postupati*, definition 5. The latter usage is especially valuable since it constitutes the only other attestation in the Uspenskiĭ sbornik—besides in its version of the VM—of the phrase *postupiti na*. The passage is found in the East Slavic translation of Gregory of Antioch’s sermon for Holy Saturday, in which an angel descends to Jesus’s tomb, pushes aside the rock blocking its entrance, sits upon it, and smiles at the broken seals, all while *postupati*’ing upon the Jews standing around and observing (ἐπεμβαίνων τοῖς Ιουδαίοις ~ *postupaja na Iudea*). See Gregory of Antioch, *Oratio in mulieres unguentiferas*, PG 88:1847–66, at 1857H’ / 1858A; and its Slavonic translation in Kotkov et al., *Uspenskiĭ Sbornik*, 393–402, at 398 (242r, lines 10–24). Much like Slavonic *postupati*, Greek ἐπεμβαίνειν usually means to step, tread, trample upon, approach, or attack, but in the patristic period, the word could also carry the figurative meaning of “insult, exult over”; *LJ*, s.v. ἐπεμβαίνω; and G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) [hence Lampe], s.v. ἐπεμβαίνω. This is the most likely definition for Gregory of Antioch’s usage, and therefore for the East Slavic usage of *postupati na*.

Old Church Slavonic (OCS) texts, *nastapati* undoubtedly conveyed the meaning of “to step onto something” (Gk. πατεῖν; Lat. *calcare*).⁵⁵ Translators of the Gospels used it to translate Jesus’s injunction: “Behold, I have given you power to tread upon (*nastapati na*) serpents and scorpions . . .” (Luke 10:19).⁵⁶ In one Old Church Slavonic saint’s life, we read of a healer who, taking Jesus’s injunction to heart, trampled (*nastapati*) all his visitors underfoot in order to heal them.⁵⁷ The perfective form of this verb (*nastapiti*) carried the same meaning, as seen, for example, in the OCS Psalter: “Thou shalt walk upon (*nastapiši*) the asp and the basilisk” (Ps. 90:13).⁵⁸ In later medieval East Slavic

55 *SJS*, s.v. *nastapati*. One outlier in the lexicography is the definition prepared by Franz Miklosich in his nineteenth-century dictionary of Old Slavonic, in which we find the meaning of ἐμβατεῖν/ *ingredi* = to step into. Of the three textual witnesses Miklosich cites for this usage, one was precisely our passage in the non-Uspenskiĭ manuscripts of the VM: *na staryje prédely nastapajete*. Understanding *prédely* as ecclesiastical districts, Miklosich thus seems to have understood our phrase as “you step into the old ecclesiastical districts.” See F. Miklosich, *Lexicon palaeoslovenico-graeco-latinum emendatum auctum* (Vienna, 1862–65), s.v. *nastapati* and *prédélə*.

56 Luke 10:19: “se daxi vamъ vlastъ nastapati na zmbjে i skorpijъ,” as found in most OCS translations of the Gospels, and here specifically in the Codex Zographensis; see V. Jagić, ed., *Quattuor evangeliorum codex glagoliticus olim Zographensis nunc Petropolitanus* (Graz, 1954), 103. Cf. Septuagint and Vulgate versions of Luke 10:19: ἰδού δέωκα ὑπὸ τὴν ἔσοντα τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων and ecce dedi vobis potestatem calcandi supra serpentes et scorpiones. My lexical research on the language of the Gospels owes much to I. Liūsen, *Grechesko-staroslavianskij konkordans k drevneishim spiskam slaviānskogo perevoda evangeliia (codices Marianus, Zographensis, Assemanianus, Ostromir)* (Uppsala, 1995), 270 and 182. Underlining throughout is my own.

57 “Life and Deed[s] of the Venerable Anin,” in the Codex Suprasliensis; I. Zaimov and M. Capaldo, eds., *Suprasulski ili Retkov sbornik*, 2 vols. (Sofia, 1982–83), 2:543–70, at 566, lines 7–8 (see also David Birnbaum’s digital edition of this folio page at <http://suprasliensis.obdurodon.org/pages/supr278v.html>): “rasmotri že svetyi potrebynu byti nastapati na vše priodeštej k njemu.” The author of the *Life* explicitly tells us that Anin was mindful of Jesus’s promise as recorded in Luke 10:19, cited above; *ibid.*, 2:566, lines 12–15. Still further in the *Life* (p. 556, lines 20–21), we read that men and women would throw themselves on the ground before Anin in order to be healed by his feet: “pometaaxą sami sę prédęb njimъ jakože nastapati jemu na nję.” Most texts in the Codex Suprasliensis are translations of Greek originals, but the Greek model for this *Life* remains unknown (*ibid.*, 1:12). It is thus impossible to compare this Old Slavonic usage of “nastapati” with a Greek original.

58 Psalm 90:13: “na aspidą i vasileskaja nastapiši i popereši l'va i zmbě,” in S. N. Sever’janov, *Sinaiskaiā psaltyr': Glagolicheskii pamiatnik XI viēka* (Graz, 1954), 121. Cf. Septuagint and Vulgate versions of Psalm 90:13: ἐπὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλίσκον ἐπιβῆση καὶ καταπατήσεις λέοντα καὶ

texts, meanwhile, *nastupati* largely retained its archaic meaning of treading or walking upon something,⁵⁹ while also taking on additional figurative meanings of approaching, attacking, or even laying legal claim to landed property.⁶⁰

In sum, a number of related translations are justified for our phrase in VM 9: “na staryje předěly postąpajete [later: nastupajete] črěsъ kanony.” Methodius could be telling the Bavarians: You tread upon the old boundaries (laws?), you attack the old boundaries (laws?), you flout the old boundaries (laws?), you encroach upon or attack the old districts, or perhaps even, you lay legal claim to the old districts—all while violating canon law. But when we study the forty-four full translations of the VM, as well as a handful of partial translations of VM 9 dating back to 1846, we do not find these lexical expectations met. Over two-thirds of the translations have understood *postąpajete* as a verb of crossing, rendering the phrase “na staryje předěly postąpajete” as some version of “you step over the old boundaries.” They have rendered the Old Slavonic *postąpajete* or *nastupajete* with German *überschreitet*, Greek *hyperbainete*, Danish *overtraeder*, Italian *travalicate*, and an array of modern Slavic verbs prefixed with **prē-* (= across): Polish *przekraczacie*, Czech *přestupujete* or *přecházíte*, Slovenian *prestopate*, Bulgarian *preminivate* or *prekrachvate*, Slovak *prestupujete*, Croatian *prestupate*, and Russian *prestupaete*. The prefix **prē-* in the majority of these modern Slavic verbs is an especially jarring substitution for the Old Slavonic *po-* in the original *postąpaci*; although the verb *přestąpaci* (to cross) was indeed common in the Old Slavonic corpus, it was not

δράκοντα and super aspidem et basilicum calcabis conculcabis leonem et draconem. See Miklosich, *Lexicon*, s.v. *nastapiti* and SJS, s.v. *nastapiti*.

59 *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupati*, definitions 1 and 2. This definition seems to have survived in modern Russian, where the perfective *nastupit’ na* means “to tread on something.” The perfective form *nastupiti* largely repeats the meanings of its imperfective relative, but see *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupiti*, definition 7: “to come, begin, or ensue”; and *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupiti*, definition 8: “to follow, go after.”

60 See *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupati*, definitions 3 and 8: “to approach”; *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupati*, definitions 4, 5, and 7: “to attack” or “oppress” something or someone, or to “rise against something” (cf. Wheeler, *Oxford Russian-English Dictionary*, s.v. *nastupat’*: “to advance, be on the offensive”); *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupati*, definition 7: “to encroach or infringe upon something”; and *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupati*, definition 6: “to claim legal rights to landed property.” Cf. *SRJa*, s.v. *nastupatisja* and *nastupitsja*.

the one chosen by the author of the VM, or by its later medieval copyists.⁶¹

This is a mistake. Despite several entries in the *SRJa*, there is no convincing case for understanding either *postąpaci* or *nastupaci* in VM 9 as “to step over, to cross.”⁶² Yet this meaning has crept into our

61 A point made by Tomšič, “Vita Methodii II,” 69–70. He repeated this reasoning in a note to the critical edition of the VM he published a few years later with his colleague France Grivec, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicensis*, 160, n. 8 (the note was surely written by Tomšič).

62 Three entries under *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti* and *postupitisja*, do contain the definitions of “to cross” or “to step over.” However, none of the textual sources on which these definitions are based justifies such a translation. The first definition, in *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 2, is based on a passage from Simeon Polotsky’s seventeenth-century *Besedy protiv protestantsva*, which describes how Hilarion of Gaza stopped a tidal wave from crashing upon Epidaurus in Dalmatia in the fourth century. According to Simeon, Hilarion had made three crosses in the sand, with the result that the sea was forbidden to *postupiti* further (*pročeje*). The *SJRa*’s definition of “to step over” or “to cross something” seems an unnecessary overinterpretation; the more commonly attested meanings of “to go forward,” “move forward,” or “advance” suffice entirely in this context, and are even, given the sense of the story, more accurate. The *Life of Hilarion*, originally written by Jerome in 391 CE, leaves little room for understanding a sense of crossing. According to Jerome, Hilarion simply stopped the wave from advancing further: *Qui cum tria crucis signa pinxit in sabulo, manusque contra tenderet, incredibile dictu est in quantam altitudinem intumescens mare ante eum steterit: ac diu fremens, et quasi ad obicem indignans, paulatim in semetipsum relapsus est.* See *Vita S. Hilarionis* (BHL 3879), PL 23:29–54, at 49C. The second definition, in *SRJa*, s.v. *postupiti*, definition 5 (end), is based on a passage from the *Primary Chronicle of Rus'* that describes a meeting between the brothers Svatopulk, Volodimir, and Rastislav at the Stugna River in 1093. The chronicle tells us that the brothers, “wanting to *postupiti* across the river” (*chotjache postupiti čereso rěku*), called a council, at which a contingent of Kievans made their position clear: “let us *postupiti* upon the other side of the river” (*postupim⁹ na onu storonu rěki*): see V. P. Adrianova-Peretts and D. S. Likhachev, eds., *Povest' vremennykh let*, trans. D. S. Likhachev and B. A. Romanov, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1950), 1:144. The *SRJa*’s definition for *postupiti* of “to cross, get across” (*pereiti*, *perepravi'tsja*) seems to confuse the verb itself for the prepositional phrase in which it occurs; while to “move across a river” or to “move to the other side of the river” certainly means to “cross the river,” the verb *postupiti* itself does not mean “to cross.” Similar confusion informs *SRJa*, s.v. *postupitisja*, definition 4, which is based on a sixteenth-century Muscovite-Swedish diplomatic document warning not to “*postupatisja* across old [border] markers and signs” (“*ctoby oni ne učinili . . . čerezъ staryi rubežъ i znamena ne postupalisja*”). Again, while the phrase to “move across a border” does indeed mean to “cross the border,” the verb *postupatisja* itself, without the preposition, simply means to advance or move forward. In short, the semantic possibilities of the verbal forms *postupaci*, *postupiti*, *nastupaci*, and *nastupiti* are broad, but they do not include “to cross.” With the right preposition

understanding of the VM and, despite some protests, largely refuses to budge. It is not a fatal mistake for understanding the dispute between Methodius and the Bavarian bishops, but it does create a blind spot for evaluating the intellectual and social context in which the VM arose. Before we get to that context, let us consider first the error itself: how did it insinuate itself into the scholarship on the VM, and why has it proven so difficult to shake? The answers reveal much about the nature of medieval scholarship in the modern era.

A Catalog of Errors

In his 1843 article, which ushered the VC and VM into the world of modern scholarship, A. V. Gorski included VM 9 in its Old Slavonic original.⁶³ When Wenceslaus Hanka translated Gorski's 1843 article into Czech in 1846, he also translated this excerpt (giving him the distinction of being the first modern translator of VM 9).⁶⁴ A few years later, Jan Wagilewicz also included a loose translation of our passage in his enthusiastic Polish review of Šafařík's 1851 edition of the VM.⁶⁵ Both Hanka and Wagilewicz's early translations of the phrase were based on manuscripts containing the later verbal variant *nastupati*, as the Uspenskiĭ sbornik, with its older reading of *postąpati*, was not yet known to them. But both of their translations stayed within the lexical possibilities of the original passage. Hanka opted for a literal reading, having Methodius warn the Bavarians, "if you step onto (*nastupujete*) the old bounds

(usually *čerez*), the phrase in which they occur may indeed convey a sense of crossing—but that is a matter of context.

63 Gorski, "O sv. Kirillie i Methodii," 428–29.

64 Hanka, "O sw. Kyrylle i Methodiu," with translation of VM 9 at p. 27. Hanka's translation reached Wilhelm Wattenbach, who summarized the contents of the VC and VM in German, in his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der christlichen Kirche in Mähren und Böhmen* (Vienna, 1849), 33–38. For a good overview of this early scholarship, see Dümmler, "Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius," 148–49; and Salajka, "Die Quellen zum Leben und zur Geschichte von Konstantin-Kyrill und Method," 5–7.

65 J. Wagilewicz, "Ś. Metody," *Dziennik Literacki* 32 (1852): 249–51, with partial translation of VM 9 at p. 250. Wagilewicz's review appeared in German translation as "St. Method, der Slawenapostel," *Jahrbücher für slawische Literatur, Kunst und Wissenschaft*, n.s. 1 (1853): 89–94, with partial translation of VM 9 at p. 92. On these reviews, see Dümmler, "Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius," 149.

(meze). . . ."⁶⁶ In this reading, the Slavonic *prěděly* were either boundaries or boundary regions (modern Czech *meze* may mean both), but the Slavonic *nastąpati* clearly conveyed a sense of stepping upon.⁶⁷ Wagilewicz, meanwhile, was more figurative, with his Methodius accusing his adversaries of "breaking into (*wdzierając się*) others' landholdings (*dzierżawy*)."⁶⁸ He interpreted the Slavonic *prěděly* to be areal expanses, and not boundaries of any kind, and the Slavonic *nastąpati* to be a verb of violent entry or attack. As we have seen in the previous section, both of these approaches are justified by the lexical possibilities of *nastąpati* and *prěděly* in Old Slavonic and East Slavic.

But these two approaches enjoyed only a modest afterlife.⁶⁹ A clearly figurative model (following Wagilewicz) can be found in the Czech translation published by Josef Vajs (1901), the Russian and Ukrainian translations prepared by P. A. Lavrov (1899 and 1928, respectively), another Czech translation prepared by Jaroslav Ludvíkovský (1967), a partial German translation by Joseph Schütz (1974), and an Italian translation by Marcello Garzaniti (2005). All these scholars understood the plural *prěděly* as regional terms; all, moreover, chose verbs expressing encroachment, violent entry, and even occupation of those regions.⁷⁰ The literal interpretation (following Hanka), meanwhile, has been less popular, and has gained traction in only the last sixty years. Although Josef Vašica proposed a literal reading

66 Hanka, "O sw. Kyrille i Methodiu," 27: "Ano prawdau, – jestli wy w horliosti – na staré meze nastupujete, skrze kanony wzbraňujice učení božího. . . ."

67 As in, upon a train, throne, or road; see I. Poldauf, *Česko-anglický slovník středního rozsahu*, 4th ed. (Prague [1965]), s.v. *mez* and *nastoupit*.

68 Wagilewicz, "Ś. Metody," 250: "Metody odpali: 'że naucza w państwie Piotrowym, strzeźcie więc abyście wdzierając się w obce dzierżawy, nibyto kościanem ciemieniem żelazną góre rozbijając, mózgu nie rozleli.' See German translation of Wagilewicz's words in "St. Method, der Slawenapostel," 92: "Method entgegnete: er lehre im Reiche Petri; hütet euch also, auf dass ihr, indem ihr euch in fremdes Gebiet eindrängt, und gleichsam den eisernen Berg mit der knöchernen Stirne sprengen wollt, euer Gehirn nicht verspritzet."

69 For citations and references to all translations mentioned in the subsequent pages, see the tables in the appendix.

70 Czech *území* (1901 and 1967), Russian *oblasti* (1899), Ukrainian *kraї* (1928), and German *Gebiete* (1974) are all regional terms. Despite Garzaniti's note that his Italian *confini* refer to the "traditional boundaries of the ecclesiastical provinces," his translation appears to understand them as areal units in and of themselves, likely border zones; see A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cirillo e Metodio: Le radici cristiane della cultura slava*, trans. M. Garzaniti (Milan, 2005), 217, n. 52.

in his first Czech translation (1942), he abandoned it in his revised translation of 1966, which would prove all the more influential as it was reissued in 1996 and 2014. In their Latin translation of 1960, France Tomšič and France Grivec rendered “na staryje préděly postapajete” with “you attack the old boundaries.” Their reading was reproduced by Norbert Rando in his German translation of 1973, while three other literally minded translators have interpreted *postapajete* even more explicitly as an act of treading: André Vaillant (French, 1968: *vous marchez sur*), O. A. Kniazevskaiā (Russian, 2000: *nastupajete na*), and Anthony-Emil Tachias (Greek, 2008: *katapateite*). Two other translators have interpreted *postapajete na* as a phrase of desire, revealing a perhaps figurative understanding of “to approach.”⁷¹ These lexically justifiable readings of VM 9 occur in roughly one-quarter of all available translations of the VM.

The error present in the other three quarters has a long and venerable pedigree. It first appeared in the earliest full translation of the VM, into Latin, by the towering figure of nineteenth-century Slavic studies, Franz Miklosich.⁷² In this 1854 translation, Miklosich conflated the literal and figurative interpretations explored above into a confusing synthesis. His Methodius tells the Bavarians: “if you . . . go beyond (*exceditis*) the old boundaries (*fines*) . . .” Miklosich’s translation married the implied sense of crossing present in Wagilewicz’s figurative reading of *nastąpati* with the explicit sense of boundedness found in Hanka’s literal reading of *préděly*. But this is misleading, for the implicit sense of boundary crossing evoked by *nastąpati* can be justified only if—at the same time—the *préděly* are interpreted as simple regions, and not as boundaries themselves. If the explicit object of *nastąpati* is a boundary, there is no justification, explicit or implicit, for understanding it as a verb of crossing.⁷³

71 See translations by Kantor and White (English, 1976) and Johann Schröpfer (German, 1964) in table 1 of the appendix.

72 On Miklosich’s life and work, see G. Neweklowsky, *Franz Miklosich (1813–1891): Begründer der österreichischen Slawistik* (Vienna, 2015). Joseph Schütz wrote of Miklosich’s “keineswegs gelungenen Übersetzung von VC und VM ins Lateinische,” in his “Die Lebensbeschreibungen Kyrrills und Methods: Neues zum Textverständnis,” *Slovo* 36 (1986): 51–58, at 53.

73 Surprisingly, Miklosich’s entries for *nastąpati* and *préděls* in his revised dictionary of Old Slavonic (1862) suggest that he may have actually understood the phrase in the figurative sense proposed earlier by Wagilewicz; see n. 55 above.

Paradoxically, the discovery in the 1850s of the Uspenskiĭ sbornik with its more archaic *postapajete* confused matters only further. Early translators did not know what to do with this rare verbal form. In his 1858 edition and translation of the VM—the first to rely primarily on the testimony of the Uspenskiĭ sbornik—August Bielowski claimed to follow this early version as “faithfully” as possible, and to resort to the later manuscript copies only when necessary.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, he ended up ignoring the Uspenskiĭ sbornik’s *postupajete*, printing the later variant *nastupajete* in its place, and offering a translation reminiscent of Miklosich’s 1854 attempt: “if you . . . step across (*przekraczacie*) the old boundaries (*przedziaty stare*) against the canons. . . .”⁷⁵ Miklosich produced a second translation of the VM in 1870, this time also basing it on the Uspenskiĭ sbornik and including its variant *postupajete* in a facing-page edition. Perhaps influenced by Bielowski’s 1864 verb choice (*przekraczacie* = “you step across”) Miklosich double downed on his earlier 1854 mistake and rendered the verb *postupajete* with an even more explicit sense of crossing, and its object with a clear sense of boundedness: “if you step across (*transgredimini*) the old boundaries (*veteres fines*). . . .”⁷⁶ The choice of *transgredior* in this second translation is especially striking, seeing that Miklosich had—correctly—not included that meaning in his own entry for *postupati* in his influential dictionary of Old Slavonic, which he had reissued just a few years earlier.⁷⁷

Miklosich’s Latin cast a long shadow over subsequent editions and translations of the VM. His first version of 1854 (*si vos . . . antiquos fines praeter canones exceditis . . .*) survived especially in subsequent Latin translations, e.g., in the critical studies of Joseph Augustin Ginzel (1857) and Leopold Karl Goetz (1897) and the source reader by Heinz Löwe (1948).⁷⁸

74 Bielowski, *Żywot Ś. Metodego*, 10.

75 See table 1 in the appendix.

76 See table 1 in the appendix.

77 Miklosich, *Lexicon palaeoslovenico-graeco-latinum emendatum auctum*, s.v. *postapati*, *postapiti*, *postapljennie*, *postapō*. Nowhere in these entries did Miklosich include a sense of “crossing over.” Instead, he proposed the meanings of “to proceed, go forward” (Gk. προένειν; Lat. *procedere*) or to “go away” (Gk. χωρίζεσθαι; Latin *discedere*) for the verbs, understanding the related nouns *postapō* and *postapljennie* to mean “a step” (*gressus*).

78 Ginzel reproduced Miklosich’s 1854 translation in his *Geschichte der Slawenapostel Cyril und Method und der slawischen Liturgie*

František Pastrnek's innovative 1902 edition of the VC and VM, in which he produced a normalized and hypothetical version of the Old Slavonic texts, included a Latin translation that also followed Miklosich's 1854 text closely.⁷⁹ France Grivec, who in 1941 published the first independent Latin translation of the VM since Miklosich, seems nevertheless to have been influenced by his predecessor's 1854 model, reproducing its Latin nearly word for word in our passage of VM 9.⁸⁰ This model made its way into modern languages as well: Josef Perwolf echoed at least Miklosich's 1854 verb *exeditis* in his Czech translation of 1873,⁸¹ while Francis Dvornik's French translation (1933) and the Polish translation by Tadeusz Lehr-Saławiński (1959) offer—intentionally or not—faithful reproductions of Miklosich's 1854 text. Lehr-Saławiński's Polish translation, in turn, was reprinted in 1991 by Jan Sergiusz Gajek and Leonard Górká, who, despite offering light emendations to the text, left the error untouched.⁸² Meanwhile, Miklosich's second Latin translation of 1870 was even more influential than his first. Although the 1854 model found immediate resonance but slowly faded, the 1870 model

(Leitmeritz, Czech Republic, 1857), Anhang 1, 20–32. Goetz did the same in *Geschichte der Slavenapostel Konstantinus (Kyrillus) und Methodius* (Gotha, 1897), 255–70, but he also included in his footnotes several alternate translations from Miklosich's 1870 translation; notably, Goetz did not include Miklosich's 1870 *transgredimini* in these footnotes. Finally, Heinz Löwe used Goetz's work to produce a synthesis of Miklosich's first (1854) and second (1870) translations in *Der Streit um Methodius: Quellen zu den nationalkirchlichen Bestrebungen in Mähren und Pannonien im 9. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1948), 53–62.

79 Pastrnek (*Dějiny slovanských apoštolů Cyrilla a Metodá*, 151) admitted to departing from Miklosich only when his translation required a correction. It is worth noting that although he printed *postqpajete*, Pastrnek did not deem Miklosich's *exeditis* worthy of a correction; he merely changed the word order of the passage in VM 9. See table 1 in the appendix.

80 F. Grivec, "Vitae Constantini et Methodii: Versio latina, notis dissertationibusque de fontibus ac de theologia ss. Cyrilli et Methodii illustrata," *Acta Vel* 17 (1941): 1–127 and 161–277, with VM at 100–27, at 14. Grivec worked from the original Slavonic as preserved in the Uspenskii sbornik.

81 Perwolf edited the VM according to the Uspenskii sbornik; see his *Fontes rerum bohemiarum: Prameny dějin českých*, vol. 1 (Prague, 1873), vii. His confusing translation departs from the text; see table 1 in the appendix.

82 On Gajek and Górká's method, see J. S. Gajek and L. Górká, eds., *Cyril i Metody: Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian. Studia i dokumenty*, 2 vols. (Lublin, 1991), 2:52. For their translation, see n. 181 below.

spread quickly and has remained. A glance at the tables in the appendix shows the Bielowski-Miklosich *veteres fines transgredimini* in twenty-six translations of VM 9 (marked by an asterisk).

Over the years, linguists did express concern and unease about the emerging mistranslation consensus. Although Nicolaas van Wijk rendered the passage in question with the usual mistake in his own 1941 translation of VM 9, he did note that it was confusing.⁸³ A decade later, France Tomšič clearly stated that translating "na staryje předěly postapajete" with "you cross the old boundaries" was in fact an error. He claimed that this sense was simply too far removed from the Old Slavonic original, and that there was a perfectly good, frequently used Old Slavonic verb that could have expressed crossing (*preščapati*) had the author intended this meaning. Tomšič proposed for *postapajete* the metaphorical and—as we have seen above—lexically justified definition of "you attack."⁸⁴ It was surely under Tomšič's influence that in 1960 France Grivec proposed this correct reading in their joint critical edition and translation of the text.⁸⁵

Yet with one exception, that of Randow, subsequent translations of the VM failed to take account of Tomšič's intervention. Grivec seems also to have remained unconvinced: in a monograph issued the same year as his joint translation with Tomšič, Grivec retained the incorrect, Bielowski-Miklosich translation of VM 9, which he had already proposed on three separate occasions between 1936 and 1951.⁸⁶ Metod Benedik remained equally unmoved: although he based his 1985 Slovenian translation on Grivec and Tomšič's 1960 edition, he passed over Tomšič's correction and

83 He found its argumentation disjointed and illogical. See van Wijk, "Zur sprachlichen und stilistischen Würdigung" (n. 34), esp. p. 78 for the assessment, and pp. 79–80 for his translation: "wenn ihr... den Kanones zuwider die alten Grenzen überschreitet...." His note to *überschreitet* (p. 80, n. 18) reads: "Oder etwa: wenn ihr... nach dem alten Nachbargebiete den Kanones zuwiderhandelt?" His uncertainty about the meaning survives in his alternative *nach dem alten Nachbargebiete*—a construction full of ambiguity, possibly meaning "past the neighboring territory" or "on the neighboring territory."

84 See n. 61 above.

85 Other scholars took note as well, e.g., Birnbaum, "Zur Sprache der Methodvita," 342, n. 29.

86 See Grivec (1960) in table 2 of the appendix. The same error appears in Grivec's earlier translations into Slovenian (1936, 2nd ed. 1951) and Latin (1941), as listed in table 1 of the appendix.

clung to the error. When Otto Kronsteiner published his German translation in 1989, he announced his explicit aim to eradicate the many mistakes that had accumulated in the body of translations, even including a catalog of those earlier errors in his introduction. Yet the mistranslation of VM 9 did not make his list, and remained in his own translation of the text.⁸⁷ Perhaps most tellingly, Josef Vašica and Joseph Schütz introduced the mistranslation into their second translations of VM 9 (Vašica in 1966, Schütz in 1985), despite having proposed *correct* readings in their first translations (Vašica in 1942, Schütz in 1974), and despite Tomšić's 1956 intervention in the meantime. The error, in short, has exerted a powerful and even seductive influence on scholars of the VM. Why?

Reasons for the Error

One reason for the mistranslation has already been mentioned: the influence and cachet of Franz Miklosich, who towered over Slavic studies in the nineteenth century and cast a long shadow over it in the twentieth. With his two Latin translations of the VM in 1854 and 1870 and foundational dictionary of Old Slavonic (1850, exp. ed. 1862), it is not surprising that Miklosich's interpretations of VM 9 would prove so long-lasting and influential. As we have seen, it would take ninety years for a Latin translation of the VM finally to break free from his model—and even after that, his interpretation would live on in modern languages.⁸⁸

We should not think, however, that translators were but meekly following their master. Another and perhaps more fundamental reason for the persistence of mistranslation is the confusing and awkward nature of the very phrase under discussion. The confusion

hinges on how one should construe *prěděly* in "na staryje prěděly postupajete"—physically, as boundaries or regions, or invisibly, as laws or regulations? Neither solution leads to a satisfying translation. If one renders *prěděly* in the abstract sense, then the sentence becomes repetitive: "you trample the laws in violation of the canons." But if one construes *prěděly* as the physical boundaries of a bishopric, then the meaning becomes opaque—how exactly can one "tread upon a boundary?" Translators, in short, have had to choose between decidedly imperfect options for rendering an inherently awkward phrase.

Seeing that VM 9 describes a border dispute, and especially that the immediately preceding sentence contains an explicit defense of diocesan boundaries, most have opted for the physical reading of *prěděly*.⁸⁹ This, in turn, has led many to resolve the resulting confusion by altering the words surrounding *prěděly*. In his 1964 Serbian translation, for example, Đorđe Trifunović kept the verb, but replaced the prepositional phrase *na* (on, upon) + accusative with *za* (beyond) + instrumental (thereby implying a completed border crossing). Around the same time, Josef Vašica replaced both the verb and the preposition used in his 1942 translation ("postupujete-li . . . na staré hranice") with explicit words of crossing in his 1966 revision ("přecházíte-li . . . přes staré hranice").⁹⁰ Even more radically, Josip Bratulić simply ignored the verb

⁸⁹ A few examples from our catalog will suffice. In his 1923 (repr. 1933) Bulgarian translation of Teodorov-Balan's 1920 edition of the VM, Kiselkov glossed the "borders" of this passage with the parenthetical, explanatory note, "of the Pannonian ecclesiastical district"; V. Sl. Kiselkov, *Zhitija na svetite bratia Kiril i Metodi: Panonski legendi*, 2nd ed. (Sofia, 1933), 39. In his German translation, Josef Bujnoch (*Zwischen Rom und Byzanz*, 184) identified the "old borders" with the "late Roman ecclesiastical organization of the prefecture of Illyricum." André Vaillant identified the "frontières anciennes" as those of the old Roman ecclesiastical province of Pannonia in idem, *Textes vieux-slaves*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968), 2:45. Marvin Kantor and Stephen R. White, meanwhile, hypothesized that "the expression 'old boundaries' may refer to the areas in which the Franks were proselytizing," specifically, Moravia and Pannonia; see eidem, *The Vita of Constantine and The Vita of Methodius* (Ann Arbor, 1976), 61–94, at 81, n. 56. Petro Lytwyn ("Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii," 80) exceptionally understood the *prěděly* figuratively, as referring to the limits of canonical regulations: "wenn ihr . . . die alten Grenzen der kanonischen Bestimmungen überschreitet . . ."

⁹⁰ Vašica's revised translation saw two further editions (in 1996 and 2014), neither of which restored his first reading of the passage.

⁸⁷ O. Kronsteiner, ed., *Zhitie blazhenaago Mefodia arkhiepiskupa morav'skaago = Das Leben des hl. Method des Erzbischofs von Sirmium* (Salzburg, 1989), 16: "Der Grund, diese *Vita* noch einmal herauszugeben, war der Wunsch, die mittlerweile schon zur Tradition gewordenen Übersetzungsfehler als Phänomen der *Geistesgeschichte* und der Beharrlichkeit von Irrlehrern aufzuzeigen." Others have also claimed in their notes to be correcting previous attempts while leaving this one in; see n. 79 on Pastrnek (1902) and nn. 82 and 181 on Gajek and Górká (1991).

⁸⁸ Consider also André Vaillant's observation ("Quelques notes sur la Vie de Méthode," 230) about "les commentateurs modernes, trop fidèles à une tradition respectable qui remonte à la traduction de Miklosich en 1870."

(*postāpajete*) altogether, and excised any verbal sense from the passage in his 1985 Croatian translation.

Most commonly, scholars resolved the confusion caused by the physical reading of *prédély* via a suggestive verbal substitution: replacing *postāpati* (to tread, advance) with the closely related *préstāpati* (to cross, transgress). Although the former appears only rarely in Old Slavonic literature, the latter occurs very frequently—even twice in the opening chapter of the VM itself, in the context of trespassing against God’s law, e.g., “the devil . . . made man transgress (*préstāpiti*) the law.”⁹¹ Replacing *postāpati* with *préstāpati* may have been especially attractive to readers of the VM, because *préstāpati* in Old Slavic literature often took *prédély* (boundaries) as its object, in an echo of the well-known injunction from Proverbs 22:28: “Pass not beyond the ancient bounds that thy fathers have set.”⁹² Early Slavic authors consistently used the combination of *préstāpati* and *prédély* to render this biblical phrase, as, for example, in the Old Slavonic translation of the Byzantine chronicle

91 The other occurrence happens in the same passage, VM 1.169–70: “zapovedь заповѣдавъ јemu искусиња, да аште съхранитъ ја, i прѣбадетъ беъмътъпъ, аште ли прѣстапитъ, съмгътъја имътъ, отъ svojeјe волјe и не отъ боžјa велѣња. узървъ је дѣјавоља чловѣка тако поčтена . . . i сътвори прѣстапти заповѣдь. . . .”

92 *Ne transgrediaris terminos antiquos quos posuerunt patres tui* (Vulgate); μὴ μέταιρε ὅρια αἰώνια, ἀ εἴθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου (Septuagint). Similar usage occurs in Deuteronomy 19:14: “Thou shalt not take nor remove thy neighbor’s landmark, which thy predecessors have set in thy possession” (Vulgate: *non adsumes et transferences terminos proximi tui quos fixerunt priores in possessione tua*; Septuagint: Οὐ μετακινήσαις ὅρια τοῦ πλησίου, ἀ ἐστησαὶ οἱ πατέρες σου ἐν τῇ κληρονομίᾳ) and again in Deuteronomy 27:17: “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor’s landmarks” (Vulgate: *maledictus qui transfert terminos proximi sui*; Septuagint: ἐπικατάρατος ὁ μετατίθεις ὅρια τοῦ πλησίου). Although the earliest surviving Slavonic translations of Proverbs did not use *préstāpiti* to render the verb, they did use verbs built with the prefix *pré* (= across). See, e.g., the so-called Dresden Bible, written in Old Czech in the fourteenth century: V. Kyas, *Staročeská bible Dráždanská a Olomoucká: Kritické vydání nejstaršího českého překladu bible ze 14. století*, Biblia Slavica 1.1/2, 5 vols. in 6 (Prague, 1981–<2009>), 4:384: “Neprzíeruy starych mezy geſſ to gſſ uulozyli przedczy twogy.” For a fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century South Slavic translation, see A. Boiādzhev, “Za srednovekovniā ūznoſlavianski tekst na Pritch Solomonovi: Izdanie na prepisa ot rukopis Shtukin 507,” *Godishnik na Sofiiskiā Universitet “Sv. Kliment Ohridski.” Fakultet po slavianski filologii* 104 (2019): 5–58, at 45: “Ne přetvarěi prédělъ věčnyxъ jáže položišъ отъци twoi.” Boiādzhev provides the transcript of a fifteenth-century manuscript held in Moscow, and dated to 1475 (pp. 17–58); he follows Svetlina Nikolova in treating this manuscript as a copy of a still earlier fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century manuscript held in St. Petersburg (p. 7).

of George Hamartalos.⁹³ It appears also in original Slavonic writings about transgressions, e.g., in the ninth-century VC to indicate a transgression of divine laws,⁹⁴ or in the twelfth-century *Primary Chronicle* of Rus’ to describe territorial disputes between the rulers of Kiev.⁹⁵ In short, the crossing of (old) boundaries was a common theme in early medieval Slavic literature. Treading upon or trampling them was not. It is thus possible that when nineteenth- and twentieth-century translators saw the rare and confusing combination of *prédély* and *postāpajete* in VM 9, they performed a mental substitution, replacing it with the more common, and indeed biblical, combination of *prédély* and *préstāpajete*, and associating the VM’s preposition *črēsō* (against, across) not only with its *kanony* but also with the newly substituted verb, *préstāpajete*.⁹⁶ Miklosich’s 1870 translation (*si . . . fines veteres transgredimini*) recalls the Latin of

93 According to Hamartalos, the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) asked an Arab chief, who had attacked the city of Amorion in Asia Minor, why, not satisfied with his own, he had decided “to cross the old and paternal boundaries”: μὴ ἀρκούμενος εἰς τὰ ἴδια, ἀλλὰ παραβαίνεις ὅρους ἀρχαῖους καὶ πατρώους; *Georgii Monachi chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1904), 2:773. This was rendered into Slavonic as “ne dovolenъ iti vъ svоasi, no prestupaeši prъvychъ ustavy отъ nichъže”; *Knigi vremen’nyiā i obraznyiā Geōrgiia mnikha: Khronika Georgiia Amartola v drevnem slavianorusskom perevodiē. Tekst, izslēdovaniē i slovar’*, ed. V. M. Istriin, 3 vols. (Petrograd, 1920–30), 1:486. In ancient and medieval texts, Greek *ὅρος* could denote both a physical boundary and a rule or decision: see *L SJ*, s.v. *ὅρος*, definition III; and Lampe, s.v. *ὅρος*, definition C. The Slavonic translator of Hamartalos clearly understood *ὅρος* in the latter sense, as *ustava* can only with difficulty be confused with a physical border.

94 In the VC, Constantine tells the Khazars that when Abraham instituted circumcision, he was “giving a boundary (*prédělo*) in order that it may not be crossed again.” See VC 10.153: “prédělъ daje, ne préstāpati jego dalje. . . .”

95 In 1054 Jaroslav the Wise divided the Kievan realm among his three sons Izjaslav, Svjatoslav, and Vsevolod, and told them “not to transgress the boundaries (*prestupati preděla*) of their brothers”; see Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, *Povest’ vremennykh let*, 108: “I takо razděli imъ grady, zapovědavъ imъ ne prestupati preděla bratija.” In subsequent years, the brothers would fight and do just this. The chronicler would return to this verb several times, e.g., under the year 1073: “For it is a great sin to transgress the commandment of one’s father” (“Velii bo jestъ grěх prestupati zapovědь otca svoego,” *ibid.*, 122). The language of these passages mixes metaphorical and territorial meanings of transgression, i.e., disobedience to the decisions of one’s father or God on the one hand, and invasion across boundary lines set by the father on the other.

96 I thank Anatole Tchikine for his observation that the verb in the Slavonic phrase may refer both to the prepositional phrase preceding it (*na staryje préděly*) and to the one following it (*črēsō kanony*).

Proverbs 22:28 (*ne transgrediaris terminos antiquos . . .*) closely indeed.

Attention to canon law seems to have confirmed this misreading by providing yet another source of confusion. Seeing that Methodius in VM 9 explicitly accuses the Bavarians of acting “against the canons” (*čreš kanony*), scholars have long wondered which canons did Methodius have in mind? In his commentary to Miklosich’s first translation of the VM in 1854, Ernst Dümmler cited three pieces of Carolingian legislation about vagabond clerics found operating in another bishop’s diocese.⁹⁷ Twentieth-century readers of the VM grew even more convinced that the *staryje prédely* of Methodius’s accusation must have meant the material, physical realities of ecclesiastical jurisdiction frequently mentioned in the laws of the church. They found support for this reading in the text of the canons themselves. In his 1958 translation of the VM, Josef Bujnoch justified his rendering of Slavonic *postąpajete* as German *überschreitet* (“you overstep”) by noting that three fourth-century canons “determined that no bishop was allowed to overstep [*überschreiten*] the boundaries of his parish and carry out spiritual functions in another’s territory,” to wit, canon 13 of the Antioch church synod of 341, canon 3 of the Serdica church synod of 342/3, and canon 2 of the second ecumenical council of Constantinople of 381.⁹⁸ A close look at these laws shows that they indeed prohibited the physical crossing of diocesan boundaries, in no uncertain terms, both in their Greek and Latin versions: “Let no bishop dare cross (*transire*, *μεταβαίνειν*) from one province (*provincia*, *ἐπαρχία*) into another . . .” (Council of Antioch, canon 13, a. 341);⁹⁹ “Let a bishop not cross (*transeat*, *διαβαίνοι*) from one province (*provincia*, *ἐπαρχία*) to another province in which there (already) are bishops” (Council of Serdica, canon 4, a. 342/343);¹⁰⁰ and “Let

97 “Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius,” 190.

98 Bujnoch, *Zwischen Rom und Byzanz*, 92 (trans.) and 184 (comm.). Bujnoch dated the Serdica synod to 347.

99 Mansi, 2:1305–50, at 1313; Μηδένα ἐπίσκοπον τολμᾶν ἀφ’ ἔτέρας ἐπαρχίας εἰς ἔτέραν μεταβαίνειν . . .; and 1314: *Nullus episcopus audeat ab una provincia in aliam transire*. . . . Mansi published three other Latin witnesses to this canon that captured the notion of crossing with different wording: *transgredi* (1324), *transitum facere* (1332), and *ingressus fuerit* (1337; listed here as canon 12). The last version also substituted *diocesis* for *provincia*.

100 C. H. Turner, *Ecclesiae occidentalis monumenta iuris antiquissima*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1899–1939), 1: 441–560, at 492–93. I translate

bishops who are placed over a diocese in no way go to (*accedant*, *ἐπιβαίνειν*) churches that are beyond the boundaries that have been set for them (*extra terminos sibi praefixos*, *ὑπερορίοις ἐκκλησίαις*). . . . Let bishops who have not been called not go beyond their diocese (*ultra | suam diocesim non accedant*, *ὑπὲρ διοίκησιν μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν*) . . .” (First Council of Constantinople, canon 2, a. 381).¹⁰¹

Bujnoch was certainly correct to identify a clear and explicit prohibition of crossing jurisdictional boundaries in these three canons; his mistake lay in transposing that sense to the rare verb in VM 9, *postąpajete*, which, as we have seen above, can on no account mean “you overstep.” Yet this model proved very attractive for subsequent translators, especially since it was well known that Methodius himself had paid attention to canon law, and specifically to canon 3 of Serdica and canon 2 of Constantinople—he had, in fact, included both of these canons in his Old Slavonic translation of Byzantine canon law, known as the *Nomokanon*.¹⁰² If Methodius knew the canons,

from Turner’s authentic Latin (text I), and cite from text I and its Greek translation (text II). Text I: *Ilud quoque, ut episcopus de prouincia ad aliam prouinciam in qua sunt episcopi non transeat*; text II: Καὶ τοῦτο προστεῆγαι ἀναγκαῖον, ἵνα μηδεὶς ἐπισκόπων ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἐπαρχίας εἰς ἔτέραν ἐπαρχίαν ἐν ἥ τυγχάνουσιν ὅτες ἐπίσκοποι διαβαίνοι.

101 G. Alberigo et al., eds., *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta: Editio critica*, 4 vols. (Turnhout, 2006–<2016>), 1:65: (Lat. text) *Qui sunt super diocesin episcopi, nequaquam ad ecclesias, quae sunt extra terminos sibi praefixos, accedant nec eas hac praeassumptione confundant. . . . Non vocati autem episcopi ultra | suam diocesim non accedant propter ordinations facientes vel propter alias dispensations ecclesiasticas; (Gr. text) Τοὺς ὑπὲρ διοίκησιν ἐπισκόπους ταῖς ὑπερορίοις ἐκκλησίαις μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν μηδὲ συγχέειν τὰς ἐκκλησίας . . . ἀλλήτους δὲ ἐπισκόπους ὑπὲρ διοίκησιν μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν ἐπὶ χειροτονίᾳ | ἥ τισιν ἄλλαις οἰκονομίαις ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς.* Norman P. Tanner translated this as “Diocesan bishops are not to intrude in churches beyond their own boundaries. . . . Unless invited, bishops are not to go outside their diocese. . . .”; *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London, 1990), 1:31. In Josef Wohlmuth’s translation: “Die Bischöfe eines Verwaltungsgebiets dürfen sich in Kirchen außerhalb der Grenzen nicht einmischen. . . . Ungerufen darf sich kein Bischof über sein Verwaltungsgebiet hinausgeben. . . .”; *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Paderborn, 1998), 1:31.

102 On *Nomokanon*, see I. Biliarsky and M. Tsibranska-Kostova, “*Legatum iuridicum Sancti Methodii et les Balkans*,” *EtBalk* 19–20 (2013–2014): 43–63. For the text itself, see J. Vašica, ed. and trans., “*Nomokanon*,” in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici = Prameny k dějinám Velké Moravy*, ed. D. Bartoňková et al., 4 vols. (Prague, 1966–1977), 4:205–363, esp. 266–67 (Council of Serdica, canon 3) and 262–63 (First Council of Constantinople, canon 2). Note the prefix *pré-*

and if VM 9 spoke about canons, then the language of VM 9 surely reflected those canons—this seems to be the reasoning followed by J. Vašica in his second (1966) translation of the VM. In his commentary to the ninth chapter, Vašica observed explicitly that “the terminology used in the VM is identical to Methodius’s *Nomokanonъ*.¹⁰³

In the generation that followed, attention to the three canons identified by Bujnoch became indispensable tools of commentary in the most important editions and translations of the VM to appear in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴ All three appeared in Lubomír Havlík’s commentary to the VM in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici*, an influential and often cited source collection published in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁵ All three appeared also in B. N. Floriā’s commentary to his own translation of the VM, the first modern Russian translation of the VM in nearly ninety years, which was published first in 1981 and then again in a major joint Soviet–Bulgarian work in 1986 (in both of which Floriā also repeated Bujnoch and Vašica’s misrendering of VM 9’s “na staryje prěděly postāpajete” as “you overstep the old boundaries”: “esli vy ... prestupaete starye graničy”).¹⁰⁶

Frames of interpretation matter: as much as they can illuminate, they can also occlude. This may be what

(= across) in Vašica’s verb in his modern Czech translation of the Old Slavonic version of canon 3 of the Council of Serdica (*ibid.*, 266): “at’ žádný biskup nepřechází ze své eparchie do jiné eparchie.”

103 See n. 37.

104 Bujnoch’s identification also made a direct impact. The first modern Greek translation of the VM, published by Ioannes E. Anastasiou in 1968, was actually a translation of Bujnoch’s 1958 German translation. Besides following the text, Anastasiou also followed Bujnoch’s explanatory notes, explaining that the “old borders” refer to the “borders of Illyricum,” and that the canons refer to same three fourth-century canons identified by Bujnoch; see I. E. Anastasiou, *Bios Konstantinou-Kyrillou, bios Methodiou (metafrasis), bios Klémentos Achridos* (Thessalonike, 1968), 196, n. 52.

105 J. Ludvíkovský, trans., “Žitije Mefodija,” in Bartoňková et al., *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici*, 2:152 and 2:152, n. 5. Ludvíkovský’s translation did not repeat the Miklosichian error, however.

106 For references to the three canons, see B. N. Floriā, *Skazaniā o nachale slavianskoi pis'mennosti* (Saint Petersburg, 1981), 157, nn. 4 and 5; and P. Dinekov and D. S. Likhachev, eds., *Zhitija Kirilla i Mefodiia* (Moscow and Sofia, 1986), 221–23, nn. 3 and 4. Citing a letter that John VIII had sent to Anno of Freising in 873, Floriā also pointed out that Methodius himself had showed interest in what the canons meant.

happened when translators, armed with their fourth-century canons, approached the VM’s odd phrasing of “na staryje prěděly postāpajete.” Bujnoch, Vašica, and Floriā all projected the sense of crossing clearly present in a few late antique church canons into their translations, where such a sense is philologically untenable. While it is certainly possible that the author of the VM knew the laws identified by Bujnoch (and especially those that were translated into the Slavonic *Nomokanonъ*), his phrasing of “na staryje prěděly postāpajete” does not support the translation of “you step over the old boundaries”—no matter how suggestive or authoritative the models of canon law (or Proverbs and Miklosich) might be.

We are thus left with two options: either the author of the Slavonic VM came up with the phrase in question himself, or else he found a model for the odd idea of attacking (or trampling) old boundaries (or laws) in hitherto overlooked sources. Luckily, research in the twenty-first century allows us to search for parallels in digital corpora of medieval Greek and Latin sources. Results show that the idea does have a long history in Christian literature, especially in late antique Greek conciliar documents and ninth-century Latin papal letters. We turn now to these records.

Trampling Ancient Boundaries~Laws

Treading upon physical boundaries and laws can be found already in the texts of the Old Testament minor prophets Micah and Hosea. In Micah 5:5 the prophet writes of physical boundaries: “And he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our borders” (ὅταν ἐπιβῆ ἐπὶ τὰ ὅρια ὑμῶν). In Hosea 5:11 we read that the tribe of Ephraim had oppressed its opponent and “trampled the law” (κατεπάτησεν κρίμα). Both passages drew some commentary in early Byzantine literature.

Within Greek literature, the idea of treading upon or trampling boundaries and laws flourished in the numerous theological and ecclesiastical texts composed in the fourth and fifth centuries. Late antique authors added qualifiers to the laws or boundaries being trampled—they could be old, or paternal, or divine. Depending on the context, the phrase could mean a breaking of the commandments of God, or the disobeying of earlier decisions made by church fathers

and councils.¹⁰⁷ The metaphor occurs frequently in the works of John of Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.¹⁰⁸ It appears in especially high concentration (fourteen times across twelve different documents) in the minutes, reports, letters, and petitions produced on the occasion of the Council of Ephesus (431). Eastern bishops present at the council used the metaphor of trampling laws, specifically, to decry the unlawful (in their view) actions of Cyril of Alexandria and Memnon of Ephesus, who had deposed Nestorius of Constantinople (22 June) without waiting for the arrival of John of Antioch and other attendees.¹⁰⁹ Clearly upset, Nestorius complained to emperor Theodosius II about Cyril, Memnon, and their supporters: "trampling (*πατήσαντες*) on both the ecclesiastical and imperial ordinances, [they] shunned a fitting and concordant profession of the faith."¹¹⁰ When John of Antioch did arrive in Ephesus several days later, he immediately presided over his own session (26 June), which in turn deposed Cyril and Memnon, and whose minutes described the two men as "those responsible for the fact the canons of the fathers and the imperial decrees have been trampled upon (*πατηθῆναι*)."¹¹¹ In

¹⁰⁷ In Greek, stepping upon could be expressed by a number of verbs: *πατέω*, *καταπατέω*, or *ἐπιβαίνω*; boundaries, laws, or decisions by a number of nouns: *ὅρος*, *ὅριον*, *θεσμός*, *νόμος*, *κανών*, or *κρίμα*; and age, or paternal providence, by the adjectives *παλαιός*, *ἀρχαῖος*, *πατρικός*, *πατρῷος*, *πάτριος* or the genitive of *πατήρ* (one could also consider the adjectives *θεῖος*, *ἄγιος*, and *ἱερός*, since authors often treated the trampling of laws as a violation of holy, God-given rules; I did not do that). The following discussion is based on proximity searches in the online *Thesaurus linguae graecae* for all possible verb–adjective–noun and verb–noun combinations of the above. Only several examples are provided from the large number of results.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, John Chrysostom in his forty-eighth homily on the Gospel of Matthew (PG 58:489): Τίς οὖν ἦν ὁ παλαιὸς νόμος, διν κατεπάτησε μὲν δὲ Ἡρόδης, ἔξεδικησε δὲ δὲ Ἰωάννης.

¹⁰⁹ Eduard Schwartz edited these documents in *ACO 1.1–5*. A selection of them has been translated in *The Council of Ephesus of 431: Documents and Proceedings* [henceforth *Council*], trans. R. Price, introduction and notes by T. Graumann (Liverpool, 2020). The English translations that follow are those of Price.

¹¹⁰ *ACO 1.1.5, 14; Council doc. 49, 310.*

¹¹¹ *ACO, 1.1.5, 122; Council, 328, doc. 53.* Similar language recurs elsewhere in the Ephesian documents: according to the minutes, "the council" had complained to John that Cyril and Memnon had, among other things, "trampled on the laws of the church" (*ACO 1.1.5, 121; Council, 327, doc. 53*); in response, the bishop of Antioch agreed to the deposition of Cyril and Memnon, calling them "the originators of the

the coming weeks, easterners would go on to rehearse this language in a number of reports and petitions sent to Theodosius II, his officials in Constantinople, and the bishop of Thessalonike. They are largely the same in language and in spirit.¹¹²

After the fifth century, the idea of trampling canons or laws trailed off in the Greek texts. Several authors took it up in the eighth and ninth centuries, although not with the same frequency. Nicephorus I, the exiled former patriarch of Constantinople (806–815) echoed the Ephesian usage when he condemned the Iconoclast council of 815 for "trampling under foot (*καταπατῶν*) the entire canonical and lawful teaching."¹¹³ Other eighth- and ninth-century Greek authors deployed the phrase in a theological key. Theodore Studites, for example, decried in his letters the trampling of the laws of God.¹¹⁴ Photius, meanwhile, lambasted a hypothetical Jewish listener in a Holy Saturday homily with a rhetorical question: "What sayest thou, O Jew? . . . Thou hast trampled (*κατεπάτησας*) the Law underfoot, thou hast slain the prophets, and now thou thrustest thy spear against the Lawgiver. . . ."¹¹⁵ Although present

lawlessness that has taken place and of the trampling upon the laws of the church and the pious decrees of our most pious emperors" (*ACO 1.1.5, 121–22; Council, 327, doc. 53*). For good measure, John and his council then also excommunicated those bishops still standing with Cyril and Memnon: "men . . . trampling the laws of the holy fathers and the decrees of the most pious emperors" (*ACO 1.1.5, 124*).

¹¹² See *ACO 1.1.3, 42; 1.1.5, 124–25, 131, 132, 133, 134; 1.1.7, 74*; respectively *Council, 564, doc. 116; 331, doc. 54; 416, doc. 79; 419, docs. 81 and 82; 422, doc. 83; 582, doc. 121*.

¹¹³ *Nicephori patriarchae constantinopolitani Refutatio et evercio definitionis synodalis anni 815*, ed. J. M. Featherstone (Turnhout, 1997) 8: ὑπὸ γὰρ πολῆς αὐθαδείας καὶ ἀνοσιουργίας κεκρατημένον δ συναθροίσας κακῶς, πᾶσαν κανονικὴν καὶ ἔνθεσμον καταπατῶν παράδοσιν . . . Nicephorus continued (*ibid.*, 12): καὶ ὅσα κατὰ τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων καὶ θεσμῶν ἐνεωτέρισαν καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς πᾶσαν τὴν ἄνωθεν καὶ πᾶλαι κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐνθέως κεκρατηκίαν παράδοσιν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθη καὶ νόμους, καθ' οὓς τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς Χριστιανοὶ ἐμπολιτεύονται, κατεπάτησαν τε καὶ κατεστρέψαντο.

¹¹⁴ *Theodori Studitiae epistulae*, ed. G. Fatouros, CFHB 31 (Berlin, 1992), *Ep. 2.9*: ἀλλ' ἐγχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, δί οὖ σου ἔξεσπάσθην ὑπὸ χειρῶν τῶν πατησάντων τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡργμένων ἐξ ὅμοιων; *Ep. 43.125*: τοῦτο δὲ ἐπειδὸν ἐκροτέοτο δευτέρᾳ ἀθώωσις αὐτοῦ παρὰ τῶν πατησάντων τοὺς νόμους τοῦ θεοῦ. . . .

¹¹⁵ As translated by Cyril Mango in *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 216. The text is from Homily 12 in V. Laourdas's edition: "Ομιλία," ed. V. Laourdas, *Hellenika: Parartema 12* (1959): 1–186, at 125: Σὺ δέ, τί λέγεις, ὁ

in ninth-century Greek texts, the phrase was not used with extraordinary frequency.¹¹⁶

The idea of treading upon laws became a favorite in ninth-century Rome, however, where Latin authors working in the papal milieu of the 860s–880s took it up with great zeal.¹¹⁷ All three popes active in this period—Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII—cared deeply about ecclesiastical law, and, in their copious letters, frequently decried violations of the canons.¹¹⁸ They also often used images of trampling or treading upon those canons. For example, Nicholas denounced both the deposition of Rothad of Soissons and the career path taken by Egilo of Sens—from monk to bishop—as a “trampling of sacred canons,”¹¹⁹ and he described Lothar’s failure to fill vacant sees similarly.¹²⁰ Nicholas was especially fond of this image in his condemnation of the layman Photius’s elevation to the patriarchate of Constantinople. In a letter of 860 to the Byzantine emperor Michael, the pope accused laymen who became bishops of “trampling respect for

ecclesiastical teaching.”¹²¹ Later, he complained to the emperor that Photius had “shamelessly trampled upon his avowal of Christianity,”¹²² and in two separate letters addressed to the eastern clergy, argued that the elevation of Photius represented not only the trampling of his predecessor Ignatius, but also the trampling of the entire “canonical order.”¹²³ Nicholas even wrote to Michael’s wife, the empress Eudocia, in the hopes that she would convince her husband to restore Photius’s predecessor, Ignatius. The pope cast Eudocia as the new Eve who now had the chance to crush Photius, the new serpent, with her feet: “It is necessary that you immediately crush its head with your strong heel....”¹²⁴ John VIII, meanwhile, also used the image of trampling (*conculatio*) liberally, in conveying a general sense of oppression in his pleas for military support;¹²⁵ in criticizing the disregard for Jesus’s teaching in matters of marriage and divorce;¹²⁶ in decrying the flattening of a fear of God in matters of monastic vows;¹²⁷ and, on more than one occasion, in condemning violations

¹¹⁶ Ιούδαιε; ... Τὸν νόμον ποσὶ κατεπάτησας, τοὺς προφήτας ἀπέκτεινας, νῦν δὲ κατὰ τοῦ νομοθέτου τὴν λόγχην ὥθεις....

¹¹⁷ Nicetas David used the language of trampling or treading upon laws to condemn Photius for his reinstatement as patriarch at the 879–880 Council of Constantinople: “He [Photius] mocked at the holy ordinances, riding roughshod over [καταπαξας... καταπεπατηκως] all the apostolic canons and ecclesiastical traditions...;” Nicetas David, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*, ed. and trans. A. Smithies, CFHB 51 (Washington, DC, 2013), 64, 92–93. Since VM most likely predates the *Life of Ignatius*, the latter should not be considered as a source for our Slavonic usage.

¹¹⁸ The history of this phrase in late antique and early medieval Latin literature remains to be studied. Certainly, some readers would have had access to Latin translations of the conciliar documents of Ephesus, which although originally composed in Greek, were transmitted in both Greek and Latin collections; see *Council*, 5.

¹¹⁹ We do not have to look far for confirmation: VM 8 preserves the Slavonic translation of a presumably authentic Latin letter (or letters) of Hadrian II assuring Rastislav, Sventopulk, and Kocel that Methodius and Constantine had done “nothing outside of canon [law]”; VM 8.175: “она же увѣдѣња apostolskajego stola dostojoштѣ vaš strany, kromě kanona ne сътвористе ničьsože....”

¹²⁰ On Rothad, see Nicholas I, *Ep. 57* (JE 2723), in *Nicolai I. papae epistolae*, ed. E. Perels, MGH Ep 6 (Berlin, 1925), 359: *sacrorum canonum conculcationem perspeximus...*; on Egilo, see *ibid.*, *Ep. 124* (JE 2809), 644: *pro conculcatione scilicet sacrorum canonum et aspernatione clericorum...*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 51* (JE 2884), 336: *non solum mandata nostra contempnit, sed et sacrorum canonum praecepta conculcat...*

¹²² Nicholas was quoting verbatim from an earlier letter, written by the fifth-century pope Celestine I, but repurposing its message for his critique of the Byzantine layman-turned-patriarch, Photius; *ibid.*, *Ep. 82* (JE 2682), 435: *calcata reverentia ecclesiasticae disciplinae...*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 90* (JE 2813), 507: *carebit tamen post mortem Christianitatis procul dubio nomine, cuius professionem inverecunde conculcat.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 91* (JE 2819), 531; and *Ep. 98* (JE 2821), 563: *pro summi sacerdotii conculcatione dolere, gemere, flere, currere ac decertare debetis.... Nam impietas tantum caput extulit, ut... ordine kanonico conculcat laici nunc ecclesiastica moderamina teneant....*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 96* (JE 2818), 550: *necesse est, ut, cum forte calcaneo vestro... caput eius protinus conteratis....*

¹²⁶ In 877 John VIII asked Charles the Bald for help against enemies threatening Roman territory; *Ep. 31* (JE 3077), MGH Ep 7, 30: *omnem nostram dispositionem in territorio Romano suis violentiis calcant*. In 881 he asked Charles III to hasten to the holy church’s aid against Guy III of Spoleto; *ibid.*, *Ep. 290* (JE 3355), 254: *quantis affligatur et conculceretur angustiis, iam dicere non valemus*. And in 882 the same pope asked Empress Richarda and the bishop of Vercelli to petition Charles III for help against Muslim attackers; *ibid.*, *Ep. 309* (JE 3380), 268: *ut... sancte matris sue calamitati subveniat et conculcationem, immo perditionem illius advertens, antequam pereamus, citissimum conferat adiutorium aut congruum sine mora donet consilium.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 145* (JE 3193), 124: *filii sui legaliter sibi nuptam Gausildam nomine contra canonum et legum auctoritatem [per] vim et per forciam abstulerunt, calcato illo precepto, quod Dominus ait: Quod Deus coniunxit, homo non separet.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Ep. 173* (JE 3235) a. 879, 140: *calcato Dei timore Gareldam sacro velamine tectam et in monasterio... conversatam, abstrahere fraudulentissima suasione....*

of episcopal jurisdictions as a trampling upon ancient decisions and canonical teaching.¹²⁸

Still more interesting is that Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII referred to earlier canons not only as "ancient laws" (*iura antiqua*) but also as "ancient boundaries" (*antiqui termini*) that should not be moved, crossed, or circumvented.¹²⁹ Although some authors at the ninth-century papal curia may have deployed the image in order to denote actual, physical boundaries on the ground,¹³⁰ they most frequently used it as a metaphor for the canons and laws of the church determined by fathers of old.¹³¹ Nicholas explicitly signaled such metaphorical usage when—after determining that proper episcopal behavior was laid out in the "holy

¹²⁸ Ibid., *Ep.* 5 (JE 3045), 4; *latere vos nolumus, pervenisse ad nos, quod quidam calcata reverentia canonice disciplinę contra omne fas, immo contra legem ecclesiasticam . . . velit ausu temerario vestram sinceritatem corrumpere. . . .*; *Ep.* 197 (JE 3264), 158: *Quod tantum nobis displicuit, quantum . . . calcata reverentia venerandorum canonum contra privilegium apostolicę sedis eum fecisse non ambigis;* *Ep.* 71 (JE 3134), 66: *Miramur vos et vebementer obstupescimus sanctorum patrum canones obtutatis oculis relegisse et calcata conscientia terminos éternos patribus positos transtulisse. . . .*; *Ep.* 68 (JE 3133), 63: *sanctorumque patrum decreta calcaneo temerario conculcasti. . . .*

¹²⁹ V. Peri, "Gli 'iura antiqua' sulla patria dei Bulgari: Un 'topos' canonico per un risveglio missionario," in *Atti dell'80 Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 3–6 novembre 1981* (Spoleto, 1983), 225–68. We have already encountered the source of this metaphor in Proverbs 22:28 (n. 92).

¹³⁰ In an unusually territorial interpretation of the Treaty of Verdun, John VIII reached for Proverbs 22:28 in order to warn the sons of Louis the German not to invade the lands of the son of Lothar I: Fr. 41 (JE 3000), MGH Ep 7, 297: *Et vos quare terminos, quos posuerunt patres vestri, transgrediamini contra fas retinendo, miramur.* Similarly, the papal librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius explained to Hadrian II that the Greeks had "moved the ancient boundaries of the fathers" in usurping papal jurisdiction among the Bulgarians, who were situated next to them: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Ep.* 5, MGH Ep 7 (Berlin, 1928), 412: *patrios et antiquos terminos transferunt, privilegia sedis apostolicae corrumpunt et pene omnia iura disponendarum dioecescon auferunt atque suis haec fautoribus consentaneis et sectatoribus conferunt. . . .*

¹³¹ For example, both Nicholas and John assured their correspondents that, in issuing the specific decisions they were communicating, they were not trying to step over the boundaries of the fathers. See Nicholas I, *Ep.* 60 (JE 2722), MGH Ep 6, 370: *Non quo nos haec dicendo terminos, quos posuerunt patres nostri, transgredi cupiamus, quos per gratiam Dei inmotos perseverare semper optamus. . . .*; also John VIII, *Ep. passim collectae* 1 (JE 2986), MGH Ep 7, 315: *etsi vocem clamantium avertere non valemus, paternos quoque terminos praefixos olim transgredi non audemus. . . .* For such papal usage, see also Peri, "Gli 'iura antiqua'."

canons" and "sacred rules"—he announced that "we deservedly blame bishops who are, as if (*tamquam*), moving the boundaries set by the fathers."¹³² The pope all but equated the trampling of canons with the crossing of old boundaries in an 866 letter to the Byzantine emperor and clergy, in which he explained that he wished to investigate and punish Photius "in such a way so that we may not cross over the paternal boundaries, we may not trample the sacred canons, or in any way break the established decisions of the holy see."¹³³ John VIII exposed the metaphor still more clearly with the following blunt explanation: "we cannot act contrary to the decisions of our elders lest we appear in anything to go around the boundaries of the fathers."¹³⁴ This usage appears to have been so popular that it even spread to the Frankish episcopate.¹³⁵

These two images—trampling upon laws and crossing or circumventing old boundaries—came together especially clearly in a series of letters that John VIII sent to the Byzantine clergy in 878. The issue was Bulgarian jurisdiction—should it be Roman or Constantinopolitan? As John wrote to the Byzantine bishops operating in Bulgaria,

We are amazed and stupefied that you, entering the provinces of Illyricum, which the Bulgarian people now hold, and carrying through unlawful ordinations there, have read again the canons

¹³² Nicholas I, *Ep.* 123 (JE 2787), MGH Ep 6, 643: *De chorepiscopis, de quibus consulis, utrum presbyteros et diaconos valeant consecrare, sacri te canones satis poterunt edocere. Quomodo autem chorepiscopos posse dicimus ecclesias consecrare, quas nulli episcoporum licet sine nostro praecepto secundum sanctas regulas dedicare? Non ergo chorepiscopis dabimus. Unde vos episcopos tamquam terminos a patribus positos transferentes merito reprehendimus.*

¹³³ Ibid., *Ep.* 90, 496; *Ep.* 91, 515: *Ita denique volumus et ita decernimus istius, immo vero cunctorum sacerdotum causas examinare, culpam suam punire, ut paternos terminos non transgrediamur, sacros canones non conculcemos nec decretalia sedis apostolicae constituta, quibus ecclesia tota fulcit atque munitur, quoquo modo violemus.*

¹³⁴ John VIII, *Ep.* 233 (JE 3313), MGH Ep 7, 207: *Et quia ecclesiæ Dei privilegium nos decet immutatum sollemniter conservare, ne in aliquo patrum terminos præterire videamur, contra statuta maiorum agere nequimus.*

¹³⁵ In 863 the bishop of Metz remarked that the "canons of the fathers" ought to be observed, since "it is never right to cross the boundaries of the fathers"; see Adventius of Metz, *Epistolæ ad divorium Lotharii II regis pertinentes* 5, MGH Ep 6, 216: *Unde oportet, ut haec audientes pio et devote studio paternos canones audient ac servent, quia terminos patrum numquam transgredi oportet.*

of the holy fathers (*sanctorum patrum canones*) but with stopped-up eyes, that treading on your conscience (*calcata conscientia*) you have shifted the eternal boundaries placed by the fathers (*terminos eternos a patribus positos transtulisse*), and that you have sent the sickle of judgment into a foreign harvest. . . .¹³⁶

John's warning to patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople, issued that same year, used similar language:

... that you not extend your foot of presumption (*praesumptionis pedem non tenderes*) beyond the boundaries set earlier for you by the canons (*ultra praefixos tibi ex canonibus limites*), nor that you shift, by any illegal claim of possession, the ancient boundaries that your fathers have set (*nec antiquos terminos, quos posuerunt patres tui, aliqua usurpatione transferres*). . . .¹³⁷

But John went still further in this letter, reaching into the "archives" (*arcivis*) of his church to quote from his predecessor Leo I (440–461) and to level the following accusation against Ignatius: "But you, most reverent brother, have reread all these things with your eyes closed, and have trampled upon the decisions of the holy fathers with your reckless heel (*sanctorumque patrum decreta calcaneo temerario conculcasti*)."¹³⁸

136 John VIII, *Ep.* 71 (JE 3134), MGH Ep 7, 66: *Miramur vos et vehementer obstupescimus sanctorum patrum canones obturatis oculis relegisse et calcata conscientia terminos eternos patribus positos transtulisse et in alienam messem iudicii falcem misse, in Yllirici provincias, quas nunc Uulgaram natio retinet, ingredientes et ordinationes illicitas perpetrantes . . .*

137 Ibid., *Ep.* 68 (JE 3133), 62: *Secundo iam sedis apostolicę litteris probaris admonitus et per missos eius contestatoriis convenitus hortatibus, iure tibi Constantinopolitanę dioeceseos, quod per eiusdem prime sedis auctoritatem et favorem annuente Deo receperas, rite contentus ultra prefixos tibi ex canonibus limites presumptionis pedem non tenderes, nec antiquos terminos, quos posuerunt patres tui, aliqua usurpatione transferres.* The writer of this letter seems to be playing with both meanings of *antiqui termini*, suggesting both the breaking of ancient laws and the crossing of physical boundaries.

138 Ibid., *Ep.* 68 (JE 3133), 63: *Sed hęc, reverentissime frater, omnia clausis oculis relegisti sanctorumque patrum decreta calcaneo temerario conculcasti. . . .* See also a later letter of John VIII, from 881, in which the pope accused King Charles III in the same sentence both of stepping over the boundaries of the fathers and of trampling (*conculcare*) upon his own family line: *Suscepis litteris glorię vestre, quibus vos plena intentione monstratis ad limina apostolorum festine, immo potius*

Let us return now to Methodius's accusation against the Bavarians as preserved in VM 9: "na staryę préděly postąpajete črěsъ kanony." While it is certainly possible that the author of the Slavonic VM had Greek-language Ephesian or Photian examples in mind when composing his text, it is more likely that he was guided by the Latinity of contemporary papal letters. If we translate the verb *postąpajete* literally as "you tread upon" or even "you trample," and if we interpret the noun *préděly* to mean "laws," we are left with: *you are trampling the old laws in violation of the canons.* This is nothing else but the contemporary and frequently leveled papal argument against violations of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. And this is indeed the most likely model for the confusing language found in VM 9.

Such a retranslation would require two changes from the usual practice. First, it would demand a reaffirmation of Tomšič's observation that translating *postąpajete* as "you step over" or "you cross" is a mistake, and a recognition that the literal translations of Vaillant (*vous marchez sur*), Knjázevskaīa (*nastupajete na*), and Tachiaos (*καταπατεῖτε*) are correct. The case for this has been made in the preceding pages. Second, it would require that we stop rendering *préděly* as physical features on the ground—as done by nearly all translators listed in the appendix—and instead treat this noun figuratively to mean "laws." This too would not be unprecedented; in fact, O. I. Smirnova already proposed this very figurative reading—specifically for the *préděly* in VM 9—in her eighth definition (out of nine) for the word *predělъ* in the *SRJa*. Despite some early reservations about this lexical project, Smirnova's reading of the *préděly* in VM 9 appears correct.¹³⁹ It finds confirmation in the other early monument of Cyrillo-Methodian literature, the VC: when Abraham instituted circumcision, Constantine tells the Khazars in VC 10, he was "giving a boundary (*prédělъ*) in order that it may not be crossed again." Abraham's *prédělъ* was, of course, not a territorial limit, but rather a legal

precipiū gressu velle convolare, quapropter attoniti vel magis stupefacti miramur decentiam vestram terminos patrum transcendere et lineam generis vestri superbo spiritu conculcare et in deterius, non in melius prorsus convenire; Ep. 267 (JE 3333), MGH Ep 7, 235.

139 This lexical project got off to a rocky start in 1975. See a particularly critical review of its early volumes in H. G. Lunt, "Review of *Slovar' russkogo jazyka XI–XVII vv.* by S. G. Barxudarov," *Language* 55.4 (1979): 920–24; see also my earlier remarks in n. 62. In general, the *SRJa* has been eclipsed for the Old Slavonic period by the *SJS*.

sanction on behavior—the same sense that Smirnova detected in VM 9.¹⁴⁰ Thus, *staryjे préděly* of VM 9 appears to be a translation into Slavonic of the Latin *antiqui termini* or *iura antiqua* so prevalent in contemporary papal writing, i.e., the late antique canons and decretals so dear to the heart of the legally minded papal curia under Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII. As their letters made clear time and again in the 860s and 870s, old decisions were not to be trampled, i.e., they were not to be disrespected, disregarded, and disobeyed.

That such a clear echo of papal Latinity would find its way into the Old Slavonic VM should not be surprising: after all, Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII all took an active interest in the activity of the Slavonic project, and the VM's explicit and implicit support of papal interests has been well known since A. V. Gorski's pioneering study of 1843.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the papal language of VM 9 fits into a broader pattern of claims made by the ninth-century papacy in its efforts to reclaim jurisdiction over the ancient Balkan province of Illyricum.¹⁴² The two major theaters of conflict in this struggle lay in Methodius's Pannonia (contested between popes and Bavarians) and in Bulgaria (contested between popes and Byzantines). Scholars have long recognized that papal strategies deployed in one theater could inform and reappear in strategies deployed in the other.¹⁴³ As Maddalena Betti has recently proposed,

140 VC 10.153: "prédělъ daje, ne přestapati jego dalje...." Curiously, Smirnova did not list this occurrence in her definition. Moreover, the figurative sense is missing from the entries in the *SJS*, even though the headings for this entry do identify VM and VC as texts containing the term; see *SJS*, s.v. *prédělъ*.

141 See discussion and notes in the introduction to this study, above, as well as M. Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia (858–882): Papal Power and Political Reality* (Leiden, 2014).

142 F. Dölger and A. E. Müller, eds., *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches: Von 565–1453*, vol. 1.1: *Regesten von 565–867*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 2009), 160, no. 301, date to 731 a lost imperial edict claiming provinces in Illyricum for the patriarchate of Constantinople (although they classify the edict as a forgery). This is what Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII cared about as they pursued a campaign to recover what the long institutional memory of the apostolic see imagined to be usurped jurisdiction on the Balkan peninsula. I thank Michael McCormick for guiding me to this reference.

143 Francis Dvornik, for example, observed that the letter sent in 878 by John VIII to Ignatius regarding Bulgaria recalls both in tone

It is likely that John VIII recognized the similarities between the Byzantine protest against the establishment of a Bulgarian church under Roman authority, and the Bavarian protest against the attempt to found a new archdiocese in central Europe. Therefore, John VIII's language and strategies, used to deal with the state of emergency in Methodius's archdiocese, were probably those which had been tried and tested in the Illyrian-Bulgarian context.¹⁴⁴

The phrasing of VM 9 appears to offer new evidence of such linguistic recycling. Just as John VIII had accused the patriarch Ignatius of trampling the decisions of the holy fathers by usurping jurisdiction in Bulgaria (*sanctorumque patrum decreta calcaneo temerario conculcasti*), so Methodius accused the Bavarians of trampling the old laws ("na staryjे préděly postapajete") by illegally claiming jurisdiction in Pannonia. Just as John had accused the Byzantine bishops active in Bulgaria of ignoring the canons of the holy fathers (*vos... canones obturatis oculis relegisse*) and collecting somebody else's harvest (*in alienam messem iudicii falcem misisse*), so Methodius accused the Bavarian bishops active in Pannonia of acting out of "jealousy and craving" in violation of the canons ("тъвънъja radi i lakomъstva... чрѣсъ kanony").¹⁴⁵ This is not only the same strategy and argumentation, but very nearly the same language. The VM offers in Slavonic translation the concepts and language concurrently deployed by the papal curia in its campaign for reclaiming jurisdiction over Illyricum.

The parallel may also be explained by the human context of the papal writing office. Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII all employed the services of a highly learned ghostwriter, Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who was also one of the fiercest supporters

and arguments the letter the same pope sent in 873 to his legate Paul of Ancona regarding Pannonia; Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, 248–83, esp. 282–83. Hans-Dieter Döpmann, meanwhile, argued in "Die Bedeutung Bulgariens für das Verhalten Roms gegenüber Erzbischof Method," in *Mezhdunaroden simpozium 1100 godini ot blazhenata konchina na sv. Metodij*, ed. N. Ts. Kochev and N. Shivarov (Sofia, 1989), 98–103, that papal experiences and events in Bulgaria actually shaped Hadrian II and John VIII's approaches to dealing with Methodius in Central Europe.

144 Betti, *Making of Christian Moravia*, 157.

145 See n. 136.

of Constantine and Methodius at the papal court.¹⁴⁶ Since Anastasius enjoyed unusual facility in Greek, he was tapped by these pontiffs specifically to conduct their correspondence with the eastern emperors, patriarchs, and clergy, as well as with a number of addressees in the Latin West.¹⁴⁷ He began writing letters for Nicholas I around the turn of 861/862, continued through the pontificate of Hadrian II, and concluded his activity for John VIII around the turn of 878/879.¹⁴⁸ We know that the letters he dictated show detailed attention to canon law,¹⁴⁹ that he employed the image of “ancient boundaries” as a metaphor for canons,¹⁵⁰ and that he frequently also

employed the image of trampling in the letters he dictated; he almost certainly wrote Nicholas’s eastern letters of 866 regarding Photius, and John VIII’s eastern letters of 878 regarding Bulgaria, both explored in the preceding pages, and both filled with the language of canons, trampling, and old boundaries. Given Anastasius’s strong support for the Cyrillo-Methodian project, Angel Nikolov has claimed that the librarian’s “views must have exercised certain influence over Archbishop Methodius and his disciples.”¹⁵¹ Indeed, our phrase in VM 9—“na staryjé préděly postapajete črěsъ kanony”—bears the very clear fingerprint of the Latinity of Anastasius Bibliothecarius.

This leaves us with one final question: how did Anastasius’s Latinity find its way into the Slavonic VM? At this point, the evidence runs dry and we must speculate. As we saw at the beginning of this article, both the Latin and Slavic clergy of Great Moravia used the testimony of papal letters in order to advance their cause. Scholars have identified at least five, and possibly seven places in the VM where a letter would have served its author as a source of information.¹⁵² Petro Lytwyn speculated that the author would have found all these letters in Methodius’s own archiepiscopal archive, wherever it may have been.¹⁵³ Aleksander Brückner even suggested that Methodius, well aware that his Slavic episcopate was in grave danger of falling apart after his death, gathered these important documents himself and conveyed them to his future biographer, along with instructions on how to deploy them in the future *Life* in order to mount an effective defense of his life’s work.¹⁵⁴ However he came upon them, the author of the VM clearly put his Slavonic text together by working closely from Latin letters, issued by the papal curia, that he had at his disposal. Could “na staryjé préděly

¹⁴⁶ On his life and work, see G. Arnaldi, “Anastasio Bibliotecario,” in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 100 vols. (Rome, 1960–2020), 3:25–37; M. McCormick, “Anastasius Bibliothecarius,” in *ODB* 1:88–89; B. Neil, “Anastasius Bibliothecarius,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 1: 600–900, ed. D. Thomas and B. Roggema (Leiden, 2009), 786–90, consulted online on 5 February 2022; B. Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006); and C. Leonardi with A. Placanica, eds., *Gesta sancte ac universalis octavae synodi que Constantinopoli congregata est Anastasio bibliothecario interprete* (Florence, 2012), xxvi–xxxii.

¹⁴⁷ Much work has been done on identifying Anastasius as the author of some of their letters. See E. Perels, *Papst Nikolaus I. und Anastasius Bibliothecarius: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Papsttums im neunten Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1920), 242–305; N. Ertl, “Diktatoren frühmittelalterlicher Papstbriefe,” *Auf* 15 (1937): 56–132, esp. 83–128; P. Devos, “Anastase le bibliothécaire: Sa contribution à la correspondance pontificale. La date de sa mort,” *Byzantion* 32 (1962): 97–115; and D. Lohrmann, *Das Register Papst Johannes’ VIII. (872–882): Neue Studien zur Abschrift Reg. Vat. 1, zum verlorenen Originalregister und zum Diktat der Briefe* (Tübingen, 1968), 225–90.

¹⁴⁸ See Devos, “Anastase le bibliothécaire,” 113–14.

¹⁴⁹ Ernst Perels (*Papst Nikolaus I. und Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, 267) saw as one of the clues for Anastasius’s authorship “Kenntnis, Verwertung und eingehende Erläuterung auch entlegenerer kirchenrechtlicher und kirchenhistorischer Quellen.”

¹⁵⁰ Anastasius equated eternal boundaries and canonical precepts in a letter he wrote on behalf of Louis II to the Byzantine emperor Basil I in 871: *Indicat itaque dilectio tua se maledictum legis pavescere, et idcirco terminos aeternos transferre et veterum imperatorum formas commutare ac praeter canonica ac paterna praecepta conversari rennuat et recuset. Et tamen qui sunt illi vel ubi aut unde fuerint prolati termini aeterni vel veteres formae aut illa canonica et paterna praecepta, minus aperte declarant, nisi forte super imperatoris nomen velit haec cuncta sentiri. Verum apud nos multa lecta sunt, multa quidem indefesse leguntur; nunquam tamen invenimus terminos positos vel formas aut praecepta prolati, neminem appellandum basilea nisi eum, quem in urbe Constantinopolitana imperii tenere gubernacula contigisset. . . . See*

W. Henze, ed., *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola ad Basiliū I. imperatorem constantinopolitanum missa*, MGH Ep 7 (Berlin, 1928), 385–94, at 386 (emphasis added).

¹⁵¹ Nikolov, “Empire, Papacy and Gentes,” 706.

¹⁵² Vavřínek (*Staroslověnské životy*, 107) identified five places; two more were added by Lytwyn, “Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii,” 89–90.

¹⁵³ Lytwyn, “Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii,” 78.

¹⁵⁴ A. Brückner, *Die Wahrheit über die Slavenapostel* (Tübingen, 1913), 14–15; cited in Lytwyn, “Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii,” 121–22.

postāpajete črěsъ kanony” represent an eighth moment in the VM in which a Latin letter served its author as a source of evidence?

Unfortunately, we do not have an exact Latin equivalent for the Slavonic phrase in any surviving papal letters. Perhaps VM 9 lifts the veil on a lost letter, once held in the archive of papal letters in Great Moravia, but now gone—we know, after all, that not all papal letters survived in their Latin originals.¹⁵⁵ Or perhaps our phrase in VM 9 reflects a lost portion of a papal letter that survives only in part—we know that many of the papal letters regarding Methodius, especially the disapproving ones that John VIII sent to Frankish rulers and Bavarian bishops in 873, survive only as fragments, and that those fragments (much like VM 9) accuse the bishops of breaking canon law.¹⁵⁶ Or maybe VM 9 simply represents the Slavonic author’s original adaptation—creative but awkward—of the concepts and language he would have assimilated by reading the other papal letters that do survive. Whatever its path of transmission, the phrase bears testimony to the culture of papal Latinity so important in Great Moravia during Methodius’s episcopate.

Conclusion

This article has addressed a particularly confusing phrase found in VM 9: “na staryjē prěděly postāpajete črěsъ kanony.” Since the nineteenth century, its preferred rendering in modern languages has posited a

¹⁵⁵ Hadrian II’s *Gloria in excelsis deo*, for instance, is today preserved only in Slavonic versions, and in its fullest form in VM 8; see n. 5 above.

¹⁵⁶ See *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, ed. E. Caspar, MGH Ep 7, 280–86. Addressees include Louis the German (Fr. 15), Carloman (Fr. 16), the archbishop of Salzburg (Fr. 20), as well as the bishops of Passau (Fr. 22) and Freising (Fr. 23); the pope’s instructions to his envoy, bishop Paul of Ancona, who carried these letters northwards, also survive (Fr. 21). In those instructions, John quoted from Leo I’s decretals (*sancto papa Leone in decretis canonicis . . . innuente ac dicente*) and instructed the envoy to convey to Archbishop Adalwin of Salzburg and Bishop Ermeric of Passau the following message: “You have condemned a bishop sent from the apostolic see without a canonical decision (*Vos sine canonica sententia dampnatis episcopum [ab] apostolica sede missum . . .*) (Fr. 21, p. 285). Similarly, in his letter to Anno of Freising, the pope accused the bishop of “behaving more tyrannically than canonically” (*tyrannice magis quam canonice tractans*) (Fr. 23, p. 286).

palatable, but philologically untenable interpretation of its preposition (*na*) and verb (*postāpajete*): “you cross the old boundaries in violation of the canons.” The translation I have proposed restores the semantic fields of the original Slavonic words—“you trample the old laws (*prěděly*) in violation of the canons (*kanony*)”—but it leaves us with a redundancy. Although less confusing, this new translation is not entirely satisfying. It reminds us that early Slavonic texts, standing at the headwaters of a new written culture, contain rare words, unclear phrases, and awkward syntactical constructions.

The VM also bears witness to the many challenges faced by medieval authors writing in a new literary language and by modern readers striving to understand them. The surviving manuscripts of the VM show how generations of medieval copyists struggled with choosing the right expression; as an archaic and awkward word (*postāpajete*) selected by an early copyist grew out of favor, it was replaced by a more accurate relative distinguished only by a changed prefix (*nastupajete*). We are able to witness here a new written language finding its way through its initial and most formative phase.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the numerous modern translations of the VM demonstrate both the successes and mistakes we have made in understanding this challenging linguistic heritage. On the one hand, the translations studied in this article have been instrumental in advancing Cyrillo-Methodian scholarship by making widely accessible one of its foundational sources. On the other hand, they have provided a breeding ground for assumptions and misinterpretations about the text. As we have seen, the extraordinary voice of Franz Miklosich has echoed especially loudly over the generations, and translators who followed him have had to deal with the additional weight of interpretative models drawn from the Book of Proverbs, late antique church canons, and perhaps even contemporary political concerns.¹⁵⁸ Mistranslations take on a life of their own. In the case of the VM, these have been disseminated to an ever growing reading public by scholars relying on the translations of others,

¹⁵⁷ I thank Dimiter Angelov for this observation.

¹⁵⁸ One wonders, for example, to what degree the twentieth century’s conflicts and attention to borders in Central Europe may have suggested a physical reading of *staryjē prěděly* in VM 9. I thank Daniel Boomhower for this observation.

by translators who translate directly from earlier translations, or by publishers of anthologies who simply reprint earlier translations.¹⁵⁹

This article has argued that the origin of the phrase in VM 9 should be sought in a Latin metaphor common in contemporary papal writings. Generations of scholars and translators, including the most careful readers of the VM, have perhaps overlooked the full extent to which contemporary Latinity shaped the language of this Slavonic *Vita*. Francis Dvornik attributed a “Greek spirit” to the text, while France Grivec even argued that the text “displays more a Greek than western mentality and manner of expression.”¹⁶⁰ André Vaillant and France Tomšič, who both recognized that the verb *postāpajete* could *not* mean “to cross,” but rather “to walk on” (Vaillant) or “to attack” (Tomšič), nevertheless remained committed to the old theory, supported by Miklosich and a number of early scholars, that the VM had originally been written in Greek.¹⁶¹ Both were thus attuned to seeking Greek models for the Slavonic words and phrases they encountered in the VM, and neither thought to look into contemporary Latin texts for help in understanding the awkward phrase, “na staryjē prěděly postāpajete črěšť kanony.”

¹⁵⁹ Martin Eggers, for example, cites Otto Kronsteiner’s (mis)translation of VM 9 in his *Das Erzbistum des Method: Lage, Wirkung und Nachleben der kyrillomethodianischen Mission*, Slavistische Beiträge 339 (Munich, 1996), 32. Translations of translations, while rare, do occur; the Greek translation of the VM by Anastasiou (1968) was based on the German translation by Bujnoch (1958), and the English translation by Nikolov (1985) was based on the Bulgarian translation by Angelov et al. (1973). See the notes to the appendix for anthologies and reprints.

¹⁶⁰ Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, 1; and Grivec and Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicienses*, 18–19. Dvornik situated the VM among Byzantine hagiographic legends of the eighth and ninth centuries, while Grivec claimed the text revealed the patristic influence of the Cappadocian father Gregory of Nazianzos. Grivec was following his student F. Gnidovec’s *Vpliv sv. Gregorija Nazianskega* (n. 36 above), in which Gnidovec claimed that the author of the VM had modeled the text on Gregory’s sermon about St. Athanasius. Dvornik and Grivec’s views on the “Greek spirit,” “Greek mentality,” and “Greek manner of expression” have been widely shared in the scholarship. Heinz Löwe (“Cyrill und Methodius zwischen Byzanz und Rom,” 696–97), for example, remarked that rereading the VC and VM reveals “how strong the Byzantine elements in them are.”

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of early theories of a Greek original for the VM, see Salajka, “Die Quellen zum Leben und zur Geschichte von Konstantin-Kyrill und Method,” 16–21. Scholars today generally agree that the VM was originally composed in Slavonic.

As a result, their translations remained only partially correct. Even Vittorio Peri, who followed in the footsteps of Anastasius Bibliothecarius and held the post of *scriptor Graecus* at the Vatican in the twentieth century, did not hear the Slavonic echo of papal Latinity in VM 9. Peri did much to position Methodius and his *Vita* squarely in the context of papal missionary activity of the eighth and ninth centuries—he devoted an entire study to the canonical *topos* of *iura antiqua* or *termini aeternī* so prevalent in the papal writing of the ninth century, and even cited the VM six times in this work—yet he never recognized *staryjē prěděly* of VM 9 as an example of the very *topos* he was studying.¹⁶² In his Italian translation of the VM, Peri even ignored the adjective *staryjē*, interpreted the *prěděly* as simple borders, and repeated Miklosich’s misreading of the verb *postāpajete* (see table 1 in the appendix). In short, the Latinity informing VM 9 has simply managed to fly beneath the radar of even the most accomplished readers of the text.

As befits a papally designated copatron of Europe, Methodius lived in a dynamic linguistic environment in which Latin, Greek, and even Slavic written records circulated and informed one another. As we saw in Methodius’s conflicts with Wiching in the 880s, Latinity was a crucial tool in the struggles over the ecclesiastical future of Great Moravia. Methodius, the Greek-speaking Byzantine in a Slavic land, understood this well. When his followers asked him which of his disciples should continue his “teaching” (*učenje*) after his death, Methodius gave a telling answer. He selected a native Moravian named Gorazd because, as he explained to them, “he is a free man from your land, *well taught in Latin letters*, and orthodox” (emphasis mine).¹⁶³ Proficiency in Latin letters was essential for

¹⁶² Peri, “Gli ‘iura antiqua.’” And see C. Alzati, “*Scriptor Graecus* della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana e storico,” in *Nuovo Liruti: Dizionario biografico dei friulani*, vol. 3: *L’età contemporanea* (Udine: Forum, 2011), 2687–95. We observe the same absence of attention to *staryjē prěděly* in another of Peri’s articles, which he devoted specifically to Methodius’s papally sponsored missionary mandate, “Il mandato missionario e canonico di Metodio e l’ingresso della lingua slava nella liturgia,” *ArchHistPont* 26 (1988): 9–69.

¹⁶³ VM 17.179–80: “въпросиš је и рекъše: кого чујеши, отъче и учи-
телю чъстъпъ, въ ученicечъ svoich, да би отъ učenja твојего тебѣ
настоленкъ быль? показа је имъединого отъ извѣстънichъ učenikъ
svoichъ, наріцаемаго Gorazda, glagolje: съ јестъ ваšeје земље сво-
бодъ мажъ učenъ је dobrѣ въ Latinьskyjъ кънigъ, pravovѣтънъ.”

Methodius and his work. As the field of Byzantine history looks outward toward a Global Middle Ages, it should remain important for modern readers of the VM as well.¹⁶⁴

164 Recent scholarly programming at preeminent centers of Byzantine Studies reflects a global turn. For example, in March 2017, the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies in Birmingham, UK, dedicated its fiftieth spring symposium to the subject of "Global Byzantium." In November 2019, Helen C. Evans delivered a public lecture at Dumbarton Oaks, entitled "Spheres of

History Department
Davidson College
209 Ridge Rd.
Davidson, NC 28035
jakabala@davidson.edu

Influence: Byzantine Art in the Global Middle Ages." The field is only at the beginning of this development.

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Appendix: Translations of *Vita Methodii* 9

Entries marked with an * indicate the mistranslation popularized by F. Miklosich in 1870.

Table 1: Translations of *Vita Methodii* (full text)

Year	Translator	Language	Translation	English translation
1854	F. Miklosich	Latin	si vos . . . antiquos fines praeter canones exceditis ¹⁶⁵	if you go beyond the ancient boundaries, in violation of the canons
1864*	A. Bielowski	Polish	jeśli wy . . . wbrew kanonom przedzialy stare przekraczacie ¹⁶⁶	if you cross the old boundaries, in violation of the canons
1870*	F. Miklosich	Latin	si vero vos . . . praeter canones veteres fines transgredimini ¹⁶⁷	if you cross the old boundaries, in violation of the canons
1873	J. Perwolf	Czech	jestli . . . proti starým hranicím vystupujete přes kanony ¹⁶⁸	if you step out across the canons against the old boundaries (?)
1899	P. A. Lavrov	Russian	если вы . . . вопреки канонамъ, посягаете на старыя области ¹⁶⁹	if you encroach upon the old domains, against the canons
1901	J. Vajs	Czech	jest-li však vy . . . vstupujete na staré území proti kanonickému právu ¹⁷⁰	if you enter the old territories against canon law
1902	F. Pastrnek	Latin	si vos . . . antiquos fines exceditis praeter canones ¹⁷¹	if you go beyond the ancient boundaries, in violation of the canons
1923*	V. Sl. Kiselkov	Bulgarian	вие . . . преминавате старите граници (на панонската църковна област) ¹⁷²	you cross the old boundaries (of the Pannonian ecclesiastical district)
1928	P. A. Lavrov	Ukrainian	коли ви . . . усупереч канонам, зазіхаєте на давні краї ¹⁷³	if you, in violation of the canons, encroach upon old lands
1933	F. Dvornik	French	si . . . vous sortez des anciennes frontières, contrairement aux canons ¹⁷⁴	if you leave the old boundaries, against the canons

165 Dümmler, “Die pannonische Legende vom heiligen Methodius” (n. 17), 160–61. Miklosich was working from Šafařík’s 1851 edition, which was based on the later manuscripts of the VM with *nastupajete* as the verb in our passage.

166 Bielowski, *Żywot Ś. Metodego* (n. 14), 23. Repr. in idem, ed., *Monumenta Poloniae historica: Pomięki dziejowe Polski*, vol. 1 (Lwów, 1864), 93–113, at 105. Although Bielowski had access to the Uspenskiĭ sbornik with its reading of *postąpajete*, he retained in his facing-page edition the *nastupajete* of later manuscripts.

167 F. Miklosich, *Vita sancti Methodii russico-slovenice et latine* (Vienna, 1870), 4–25, at 17 for Latin translation of VM 9, and 26 for discussion of manuscripts used. This is the second translation (after Bielowski’s) to rely on the Uspenskiĭ sbornik, but the first to print *postąpajete* in its facing-page edition. Unless otherwise specified in these notes, all subsequent translators follow the Uspenskiĭ sbornik’s *postąpajete*.

168 Perwolf, *Fontes rerum bohemiarum* (n. 81), 47.

169 P. G. Vinogradov, ed., *Kniga dlja chteniâ po istorii srednikh vekov, sostavленная kruzhkom prepodavatelej* (Moscow, 1899), 168–80, at 175.

170 J. Vajs, “Panonský životopis sv. Methoda,” *Časopis katolického duchovenstva* 42.6 (1901): 386–90; and ibid., 42.7 (1901): 475–86, at 480. Vajs retained the later reading of *nastupujete* in our passage, as he was working largely from Šafařík’s 1851 edition; see his notes on p. 386.

171 Pastrnek, *Dějiny slovanských apoštól Cyrilla a Methoda* (n. 15), 230. Pastrnek also included (p. 101) a Czech translation of VM 9, which faithfully reflected his Latin translation: “jestliže vy . . . za staré hranice postupujete.”

172 Kiselkov, *Zhitija na svetite bratia Kiril i Metodi* (n. 89), 38–39. Kiselkov’s translation was reprinted in P. Dinekov, ed., *Proslava na Kiril i Metodii: Po sluchaji 1100-godishninata na slavjanskata pismenost* (Sofia, 1963), 47–57, at 53.

173 P. A. Lavrov, *Kyrylo ta Metodi v davn'o-slovjan'skomu pys'menstvi: Rozvidka* (Kiev, 1928), 295–313, at 306.

174 I am citing the second edition: F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, 2nd ed. (Hattiesburg, MS, 1969), 381–93, at 388.

Year	Translator	Language	Translation	English translation
1933*	J. Stanislav	Slovak	ak vy... prestupujete dávne hranice v protive s kánonom ¹⁷⁵	if you step over the old boundaries, against the canons
1935*	J. Němec and J. Němec	Czech	přestupujete-li vy... dávné hranice proti právu církevnímu ¹⁷⁶	if you step over the old boundaries, against ecclesiastical law
1936*	F. Grivec	Slovenian	vi... stare meje prestopate proti cerkvenim zakonom ¹⁷⁷	you step over the old boundaries, against church laws
1941	F. Grivec	Latin	si vos... antiquos fines exceditis contra (praeter) canones ¹⁷⁸	if you go beyond the ancient boundaries, in violation of the canons
1942	J. Vašica	Czech	postupujete-li vy... proti církevním zákonům na staré hranice ¹⁷⁹	if you step upon the old boundaries, against the ecclesiastical laws
1958*	J. Bujnoch	German	wenn ihr... die alten Grenzen entgegen den kanonischen Bestimmungen überschreitet ¹⁸⁰	if you step over the old boundaries, against the provisions of the canons
1959	T. Lehr-Splawiński	Polish	jeśli wy... poza dawne granice wychodzicie wbrew prawu (kościelnemu) ¹⁸¹	if you go beyond the old boundaries, against (ecclesiastical) law
1960	F. Grivec and F. Tomšič	Latin	si vos... antiquos fines agredimini contra (praeter) canones ¹⁸²	if you attack the old boundaries, against the canons
1963*	?	Croatian	vi... prestupate stare granice protiv crkvenim zakonima ¹⁸³	you cross the old boundaries, against ecclesiastical laws
1963*	A. Miškovič	Slovak	ak vy... prestupujete dávne hranice v protive s kánonmi ¹⁸⁴	if you step over the old boundaries, against the canons
1964	D. Trifunović	Serbian	ви... за старим границама поступате противно канонима ¹⁸⁵	you are treading beyond the old boundaries, against the canons
1966*	J. Vašica	Czech	Přecházíte-li vy... proti kánonům přes staré hranice ¹⁸⁶	if you cross over the old boundaries, against the canons

175 J. Stanislav, *Životy slovanských apoštolov Cyrila a Metoda: Panonsko-moravské legendy* (Prague-Bratislava, 1933), 63–87, at 78. Stanislav published a subsequent edition in 1950.

176 J. Němec and J. Němec, trans., "Legenda o Metodějovi," *Sborník Velehradský* n.s. 6 (1935): 215–24, at 220.

177 F. Grivec, *Žitja Konstantina in Methodija* (Celje, 1936), 93–112, at 106. Grivec published a second edition in 1951.

178 Grivec, "Vitae Constantini et Methodii," (n. 80), 118.

179 "Život svatého Metoděje: Staroslovanská legenda z konce IX. nebo z počátku X. století," trans. J. Vašica, in *Na úsvitu křest'anství: Z naší literární tvorby doby románské v století IX.–XIII.*, ed. V. Chaloupecký (Prague, 1942), 44–54, at 50.

180 Bujnoch, *Zwischen Rom und Byzanz* (n. 21), 81–100, at 92. I have been unable to check the subsequent edition that appeared in 1972.

181 Lehr-Splawiński, *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego (obszerne)* (n. 41), 95–121, at 112; reprinted in idem, *Konstantyn i Metody* (n. 3), 231–246, at 240. Lehr-Splawiński's translation was reprinted, with some corrections based on a reading of the Old Slavonic original, in

Gajek and Górká, *Cyril i Metody* (n. 82), 2:52–64. In our particular passage, Gajek and Górká replaced Lehr-Splawiński's "(ecclesiastical) law" with "canons," but retained the verb: "jesli wy... poza dawne granice wychodzicie wbrew kanonom..." (*ibid.*, 2:59).

182 Grivec and Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicensis* (n. 15), 214–38, at 229.

183 "Život Metoda," in *Žitja sv. Ćirila i Metoda* (Zagreb, 1963), 61–85, at 76.

184 Alojzy Miškovič's Slovak translation first appeared in the pages of the Slovak theological journal *Duchovný pastier* in 1963. It was then reprinted by P. Ratkoš in various source anthologies in 1964, 1968, 1977, and 1990. I am citing from Ratkoš's 1964 anthology, *Pramene k dejinám Vel'kej Moravy* (Bratislava, 1964), 253–66, at 262.

185 Đ. Trifunović, *Ćirilo i Metodije: Žitija, službe, kanoni, pohvale* (Belgrade, 1964), 145–72, at 161.

186 Vašica, *Literární památky epochy velkomoravské* (n. 37), 231–55, at 237. Second and third editions appeared in 1996 and 2014.

Table 1: *continued*

Year	Translator	Language	Translation	English translation
1967	J. Ludvíkovský	Czech	Jestliže však vy... okupujete stará území proti (znění) kánonů ¹⁸⁷	if you occupy the old lands, against (the wording of) the canons.
1968*	I. E. Anastasiou	Greek	ἄν ίμεις . . . ὑπερβαίνετε τὰ ἀρχαῖα ὅρια, παρὰ τὸν δρισμοὺς τῶν κανόνων ¹⁸⁸	if you step over the old boundaries, against the canonical regulations
1968	A. Vaillant	French	si . . . vous marchez sur les frontières anciennes contrairement aux canons ¹⁸⁹	if you are walking upon the ancient boundaries, against the canons
1969*	G. Svane	Danish	hvis I . . . overtræder de gamle grænser [og handler] mod de kanoniske forskrifter ¹⁹⁰	if you overstep the old boundaries [and act] against the canonical regulations
1969	R. Ugrinova-Skalovska	Macedonian	ако вие . . . по старите граници постапувате противно на каноните ¹⁹¹	if you behave contrary to the canons along the old boundaries
1973*	B. St. Angelov, K. Kuev, and K. Kodov	Bulgarian	ако вие . . . прекрачвате, въпреки каноните, старите граници ¹⁹²	if you step across the old boundaries, against the canons
1973	N. Randonow	German	wenn ihr . . . entgegen den Kirchengesetzen die alten Grenzen angreift ¹⁹³	if you attack the old boundaries, against the ecclesiastical laws
1976	M. Kantor and R. S. White	English	if you . . . transgress canon for the old boundaries ¹⁹⁴	n/a
1981*	B. N. Floriā	Russian	если вы . . . преступаете старые границы, нарушая каноны ¹⁹⁵	if you step over the old boundaries, violating the canons
1981*	V. Peri	Italian	si . . . travalicate i confini in dispregio ai canoni ¹⁹⁶	if you cross the boundaries, in contempt of the canons
1985*	M. Benedik	Slovenian	če vi . . . stare meje prestopate proti cerkvenim zakonom ¹⁹⁷	if you cross the old boundaries, against the ecclesiastical laws

187 “Žitije Mefodija,” in Bartoňková et al., *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici* (n. 102), 2:134–63, at 152. Jaroslav Ludvíkovský prepared the translation, while Lubomír Havlík prepared the commentary.

188 Anastasiou, *Bios Konstantinou-Kyrillou* (n. 104), 149–61, at 156. Anastasiou was translating directly from Bujnoch’s 1958 translation.

189 Vaillant, *Textes vieux-slaves* (n. 89), 2:34–46, at 2:39.

190 G. Svane, ed., *Konstantinos (Kyrillos) og Methodios, slavernes apostle: Syv Kyrillomethodianske tekster* (Copenhagen, 1969), 73–87 at 81. I have followed Google Translate for the English.

191 R. Ugrinova-Skalovska, *Panonski legendi: Žitie na Konstantina. Žitie na Metodiju* (Skopje, 1969), 65–80, at 75. The same translation, at least of this passage, appears in R. Ugrinova-Skalovska and L. Basotova, eds., *Svedoštva za Kiril i Metodij: Slovenski i latinski izvori* (Skopje, 1989), 54–67, at 62.

192 Angelov et al., *Sūbrani Sūčineniā* (n. 42), 200. This excerpt was reprinted along with others by S. Paskalevski and R. Zlatanova in their exhibition catalog, *Die Vita des heiligen Methodius* (Munich, 2006), 19–51, at 37.

193 N. Randonow, *Die pannonischen Legenden: Das Leben der Slawenapostel Kyrill und Method* (Vienna, 1973), 47–61, at 56. Paskalevski and Zlatanova claim to have reprinted excerpts from Randonow’s 1972 Berlin issue of this text in their *Die Vita des heiligen Methodius* (n. 192). However, their German version of our passage in VM 9 departs from Randonow’s translation and more clearly echoes Angelov et al.’s 1973 Bulgarian translation, which they also reprint (p. 37): “wenn ihr . . . die alten Grenzen überschreitet . . .”

194 Kantor and White, *The Vita of Constantine and The Vita of Methodius* (n. 89), 81.

195 Floriā, *Skazaniā o nachale slaviānskoj pišmennosti* (n. 106), 93–101, at 98. Floriā’s translation appeared again in Dinekov and Likhachev, *Zhitīā Kirilla i Mefodiā* (n. 106), 212–32, at 224.

196 V. Peri, ed. and trans., *Cirillo e Metodio: Le biografie paleoslave* (Milan, 1981), 100–113, at 108.

197 M. Benedik, *Sveta brata Ciril in Metod v zgodovinskih virih ob 1100 letnici Metodove smrti* (Ljubljana, 1985), 196–211, at 205.

Year	Translator	Language	Translation	English translation
1985	J. Bratulić	Croatian	ako vi . . . za starim granicama, protiv crkvenih kanona, zabranjujete Božje učenje ¹⁹⁸	if you forbid the teaching of God beyond the old boundaries, against the canons
1985*	S. Nikolov	English	if you . . . trespass, despite the canons, over the old borders ¹⁹⁹	n/a
1985*	A. E. Naumow	Polish	jeśli wy . . . przekraczacie dawne granice, naruszając prawo ²⁰⁰	if you cross the old boundaries, violating the law
1985*	E. Pauliny and S. Ondrus	Slovak	ak vy . . . cez staré hranice prestupujete v protive s kánonmi ²⁰¹	if you step across the old boundaries, in opposition to the canons
1985*	J. Schütz	German	wenn ihr . . . entgegen den Kirchengesetzen die alten Grenzen überschreitet ²⁰²	if you step over the old boundaries, against the ecclesiastical laws
1986*	Š. Vragaš	Slovak	ak vy . . . prestupujete cez staré hranice v protiklade s kánonmi ²⁰³	if you step across the old boundaries, in opposition to the canons
1989*	O. Kronsteiner	German	Wenn ihr . . . die alten Grenzen überschreitet und mit Gesetzen die Lehre Gottes verbietet ²⁰⁴	if you step over the old boundaries and forbid the teaching of God with laws
2000	O. A. Kníževská	Russian	если вы . . . вопреки канонам на старые пределы наступаете ²⁰⁵	if you tread on the old boundaries, in violation of the canons
2005	M. Garzaniti	Italian	Se . . . penetrate negli antichi confini contro i canoni ²⁰⁶	if you penetrate into the ancient frontier areas, against the canons
2006	A. Prōtopapas	Greek	n/a ²⁰⁷	n/a
2008	A.-E. N. Tachiaos	Greek	’Αν ἐσεῖς . . . παρὰ τοὺς κανόνες, καταπατεῖτε τὰ παλαιὰ ὅρια ²⁰⁸	if you trample the old boundaries, against the canons

198 J. Bratulić, *Žitja Konstantina Ćirila i Metodija i druga vrela* (Zagreb, 1985), 91–119, at 107. A second edition appeared in 1992.

199 See n. 42.

200 A. E. Naumow, ed., *Pasterze wiernych słowian: Święci Cyryl i Metody* (Kraków, 1985), 73–84, at 76. This is mostly a complete translation, although some parts are summarized.

201 E. Pauliny and Š. Ondruš, trans., *Život a dielo Metoda, prvoučitela národa slovenskeho* (Bratislava, 1985), 50–66, at 60.

202 J. Schütz, *Die Lehrer der Slawen Kyrill und Method: Die Lebensbeschreibungen zweier Missionare* (Sankt Ottilien, 1985), 83–106, at 97. Before settling on the Miklosich model in this translation, Schütz had translated VM 9 earlier (1974) according to the figurative model first proposed by Wagilewicz; see table 2 in the appendix.

203 I am citing from the second edition, which appeared in 1991: Š. Vragaš, trans., *Život sv. Konštantína Cyrila a život sv. Metoda: Podľa staroslovienskeho textu a iných prekladov*, 2nd ed. (Martin, Slovakia, 1991), 71–90, at 83. Vragaš’s translation was reprinted in A. Škoviera, ed., *Pramene o živote svätých Cyrila a Metoda a ich učeníkov* (Bratislava, 2013), 41–56, at 51.

204 Kronsteiner, *Zhitie blazhenaago Mefodia arkhiepiskupa morav'skaago* (n. 87), 29–89, at 67.

205 O. A. Kníževská, “Zhitiye Mefodiya,” in *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi*, ed. D. S. Likhachev et al., 20 vols. (Saint Petersburg, 1997–<2006>), 2:66–81, at 77.

206 Tachiaos, *Cirillo e Metodio*, trans. Garzaniti (n. 70), 207–23, here 217. Despite Garzaniti’s note (217, n. 52) that the *confini* refer to the “traditional boundaries of the ecclesiastical provinces,” his translation appears to understand them as aerial units in and of themselves.

207 A. Prōtopapas, *Kyrillos kai Methodios anamesa stous Slavous* (Nicosia, 2006), 183–238. I have been unable to find a copy of this work. It is cited by A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Kyrillos kai Methodios: Hoi archaioteres viographies tōn thessalonikeōn ekpolitistōn tōn Slavōn* (Thessalonike, 2008), 40, n. 53.

208 Tachiaos, *Kyrillos kai Methodios* (n. 207), 191–212, at 203.

Table 2: Translations of *Vita Methodii* (chapter 9 only)

Year	Translator	Language	Original	English translation
1846	W. Hanka	Czech	jestli wy... na staré meze nastupujete, skrze kanony wzbraňujíce učení božího ²⁰⁹	if you step upon the old boundaries, prohibiting the teaching of God in violation of the canons
1852	J. Wagilewicz	Polish	wdzierając się w obce dzierżawy ²¹⁰	breaking into the landholdings of others
1853	[anonymous]	German	indem ihr euch in fremdes Gebiet eindringt ²¹¹	as you intrude into a foreign region
1941*	N. van Wijk	German	wenn ihr... den Kanones zuwider die alten Grenzen überschreitet ²¹²	if you step over the old boundaries, contrary to the canons
1960*	F. Grivec	German	wenn ihr... die alten Grenzen, entgegen dem Kirchenrecht, überschreitet ²¹³	if you step over the old boundaries, against canon law
1962*	P. Lytwyn	German	wenn ihr... die alten Grenzen der kanonischen Bestimmungen überschreitet ²¹⁴	if you transgress the old boundaries of the canonical provisions
1964	J. Schröpfer	German	wenn ihr aus Eifersucht und Habgier nach den alten Gebieten gegen die Kirchengesetze verstößet ²¹⁵	if you transgress the ecclesiastical laws out of jealousy and greed for the old regions
1974	J. Schütz	German	wenn ihr... in die alten Gebiete eindringt entgegen den Kanones ²¹⁶	if you intrude into the old regions, against the canons
1985*	P. Dinekov (trans. R. Delcheva)	Bulgarian (English)	if you step over the old boundaries... despite the canons ²¹⁷	n/a

²⁰⁹ Hanka, “O sw. Kyrille i Methodiu,” (n. 27), 27. Hanka’s article was a translation of Gorski, “O sv. Kirillie i Methodii” (n. 16), with VM 9 in its Old Slavonic at pp. 428–29.

²¹⁰ Wagilewicz, “Ś. Metody” (n. 65).

²¹¹ For this anonymous German translation of Wagilewicz’s 1852 Polish review, see n. 65.

²¹² Van Wijk, “Zur sprachlichen und stilistischen Würdigung” (n. 34), 79–80.

²¹³ Grivec, *Konstantin und Method* (n. 1), 92–93.

²¹⁴ Lytwyn, “Die literarische Gattung der Vita Methodii” (n. 6), 80–81.

²¹⁵ Schröpfer, “Eine armenische Quelle der slavischen Vita Methodii, Kap. IX” (n. 38), 435–36.

²¹⁶ Schütz, “Die Reichssynode zu Regensburg (870)” (n. 39), 3–4.

²¹⁷ P. Dinekov’s *Lichnostta na slaviānskiiā prosvetitel Metodiū* quotes from the VM, including large parts of VM 9, in order to create a summary of Methodius’s life. Although the Bulgarian original of the book is difficult to find, English, German, and Russian translations are readily available: *Methodius, the Slav Enlightener*, trans. R. Delcheva (Sofia, 1985), 32; *Method ein bedeutender Slawenlehrer*, trans. L. Markova and K. Georgieva (Sofia, 1985), 36; and *Slaviānskiiā prosvetitel’ Mefodiū*, trans. A. Fedotov (Sofia, 1985), 33. Seeing that all three translations correspond closely to one another, I have given only Delcheva’s English here.